US Election 2004 UPDATES:

WORLD/A11

Republicans retain control of Senate, House

Long lines, short tempers, scattered snafus, but nothing major mars Election Day

World leaders hedging bets with unclear poll results

WORLD/A12

From obscurity, one-man melting pot Barack Obama now US senator

Pinoys, expats in Asia party as they watch polls

NOTE: A 16-hour time difference with the US East Coast. Filipinos had to roll out of bed early to 'tie on hand as the US Embassy party in Manila as the first precincts in America closed yesterday local time.

US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone quipped that he might jak the food spon sors—including Tanpo King, Dunkin' Donuts

PHILIPPINE DAILY

INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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Bush claims victory; Kerry 'no surrender'

RETURNING to the White House in Washington to examine the election results, the Bushes—George W., wife Laura, twin daughters Barbara and Jenna—arrive high-spirits and top down despite the Arctic chill they went through the tumultuous events on election eve. ●

Legal battle may decide outcome of cliffhanger

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush's campaign claimed a "decisive victory" Wednesday in the race for the White House but Democratic challenger John Kerry refused to concede, keeping the country on edge again four years after a recount battle in Florida had delayed the election outcome for five weeks.

In what was shaping up as a Midwest replay of 2000, Kerry's campaign challenged the results in Ohio and said it would not abandon the campaign until all the votes in that critical state, including an unknown number of provisional and absentee ballots, had been counted. Provisional ballots are issued yours when their registration is challenged.

Although the Ohio results appeared to several major US television networks to be too close to call, the White House declared victory.

With 270 electoral votes need ed to win, Bush had captured 28 states with 254 electoral votes. Kerry won 20 states and 252 votes.

Bush, sweeping to an apparent popular vote victory, held a lead of nearly 3.5 million votes over Kerry nationwide with 99 percent of the precincts reporting.

Still undecided were Iowa (seven electoral votes), New Mexico (five electoral votes) and Ohio (20 electoral votes), but only Ohio could make either candidate the winner. (Story at right.)

White House chief of staff Andrew Card said Bush had received Ohio by a "statistically unanswerable" number of votes and won re election by a "decisive margin."

ALICE born in Massachusetts, and living in presidential candidate John Kerry and wife Teresa on Nov. 2 took relieved at the end of a long, bitter and exhilarating presidential campaign. But the fight isn't quite finished for the Democratic challenger.

Kerry's White House dreams rest on Ohio

BOSTON, Massachusetts—John Kerry's White House dreams on Wednesday rested unsteadily on the key Midwestern state of Ohio, which he must snatch or retain hopes of ousting President George W. Bush.

Ohio emerged as the likely setting for another contentious presidential court fight, with election director or tens of thousands of uncounted ballots cast by people who would otherwise have been turned away from the polls.

"There is no question Ohio is absolutely crucial," said Democratic Party chair Terry McAuliffe.

"People are still voting in Iowa in Ohio," he said, pointing to a high turnout in Democratic strongholds. Iowans after polls were supposed to have closed.

Kerry watched from his home in Boston as the race narrowed agonizingly, while around 10,000 supporters waited for what they

Lawyers leap into fray: Here we go again

WASHINGTON—Here we go again. Just as in 2000, Americans woke up on Wednesday not sure who would be the next president, and with lawyers from both sides leaping into the fray.

"We're right back to 2000. The country is just divided right down the middle," said University of Virginia political scientist Larry Sabato. "And there are a lot of lawsuits in Ohio."

But while this year's cliffhanger seems in many ways a repeat of four years ago—with Ohio replacing Florida as the pivotal election battleground—this year President George W. Bush had something he didn't then: a substantial lead in the popular vote.

Nationally, Bush rolled up a 51 percent to 48 percent overall advantage.

Four years ago, Democrat Al Gore won the popular vote, albeit by a fraction of a percentage point, but lost the electoral vote to Bush after the Supreme Court stopped a recount in Florida.

In many Democratic, there was a sense of poetic justice—or payback—in the re-

ROBERT TARONGOY

Sis missed Tarongoy's call

By Anthony S. Alfado
PDI Mindanao Bureau
and Jeanine Aciang
in Manila

DAVAO CITY—At dawn he joined eagerly Robert Tarongoy cried on reading his family on New 1, when Iraqi insurgents lobbed into the compound of the Saudi firm he works for in western Baghdad.

But his younger sister Lilibeth was stood asleep when the call came through on her mobile phone. "I was only in the morning that I noticed the missed call," she told the Inquirer yesterday.

The 33-year-old Tarongoy has Tarongoy as earlier reported was abducted on Monday by Iraqi insurgents along with an American, a Bajalese and three Iraqis.

He worked as an accountant in the Saudi Arabian Trading and Construction Co. (Satco), which caters food for Iraqi forces and others. His family lives in the San Pedro Alternated Park compound in Matina Singles subdivision in this city.

Forks, spoons, yes: Ferragamo shoes, no

By Armand N. Nocum

EYEBALLS will be opened, but not Ferragamo shoes and suits or luxuries.

Speaking on senator Teresa Dilia Ignacio yesterday said that the government was not so hesitant on its latest bidding for the family of Maj. Gen. Car-

AMLC allowed to look into nine Garcia accounts

By Tarra V. Quismundo
and Alcuin Papa

THE BANK accounts and investment placements of Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia and his family can now be scrutinized by the Anti-Money Laundering Council.

A Manila judge on Tuesday granted the AMLC's motion to look into the accounts of the Garcias in eight banks and one savings and loan association in Metro Manila, which are believed to be holding part of the alleged ill-gotten wealth amassed by the former military comptroller.

The accounts are in the name of Garcia, his wife Clarita, and sons Ian Carl, 26, Juan Paolo, 23, and Timothy Mark, 21.

On Tuesday, the Intelligence unit found a former aide on Garcia's assets.

The AMLC has sought to inquire into the

Taliban extends deadline for Nayan

BAMIU—A Taliban splinter group claiming to hold Filipino diplomat Angelito Nayan and two other foreign workers of the United Nations in Afghanistan extended the Wednesday deadline for their killing as an Afghan official appeared optimistic in winning the hostages' release.

"Our leaders decided in a council [meeting] to extend the deadline up to [Ini Wednesday] evening to give enough time for the ongoing negotiations," Sayed Khaksar, one of at least three men claiming to speak on behalf of the Jaish Muhammad, told Agence France-Presse by phone from a secret location.

Khaksar did not set an exact time for the new deadline from the original midday (0730 GMT) of Wednesday.

Mediators were in touch with Jaish leaders to negotiate the hostages' release, but Khaksar would not identify them.

"There are people talking with our leaders. Whether those people are talking on behalf of the UN or the government or both of them, I cannot say," he said.

Afghan authorities, who have still not

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2004
Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

We're now out of fiscal crisis–GMA

By DJC. Calaunganjr

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday declared that the country has wriggled out of fiscal crisis, barely three months after admitting that her government was in dire financial straits to coerce Filipinos in accepting painful reforms such as high taxes, higher power rates and spartan expenses.

She warned, however, that there was still much work to be done.

In a brief talk at the headquarters of GMA Broadcasting Corp., President Arroyo said: "We are now getting out of that (fiscal) crisis and I told my Cabinet members, let's not talk crisis anymore. We can't afford to send the people and the businesses [responded]."

Since making a candid admission of her government's inability to sustain its expenditures through continued borrowings, the President has been able to coax Congress to move faster in approving new tax measures (specifically the increase in taxes on alcohol and cigarettes). She has also allowed the Energy Regulatory Commission to increase the National Power Corp.'s rates by 67 centavos per kilowatt hour and coerced government agencies and government-owned-and-controlled corporations to make cheep cuts in their spending and their officials' perks and tidbits.

"Since I made that call, things have happened which gives us more room for optimism. We are prepared to have a good Christmas," said the President.

ARROYO

The President declared the country was in a serious fiscal crisis shortly after 11 parliamentarians from the Democracy of the Philippines School of Economics spoke out with a paper saying that the country was edging closer to an Argentina-style crisis if the government does not address the ballooning public sector deficit.

On top of paving the way for the implementation of tax reforms, the President noted that her move to sound the alarm bells has rekindled the "bayanihan spirit" among Filipinos as both institutions and individuals have stepped in with their contributions to help their calamity-stricken countrymen.

That today, I got some calls from some children in Tarong [Guimaras] that PTSD [Andolong's] money effort to write a receipt and thank you note for their contribution in solving the crisis. If that is not symbolic, then we are out of the crisis," the President said.

But the President said "there area still much work to be done" especially in achieving her medium-term goals of further paring down debt and increasing economic growth to reduce poverty in the country.

Salamat sa pag-asa!

Maraming salamat sa mga ganitigawa ng maamba, barina, bigas, asukal, at iodo na ungata sa DAGDAG SUSTANYANG Sangkap Pinoy – Vitamin A, Iodine, at Iron. Di ang magpapalakas at magpapatibay sa mga buong Pilipino. Dahil sa inyo, mas maraming mga bata ang maglalaro ang PHG-ASA sa bukid.

Sangkap Pinoy – Dagdag Sustansya, Sangkap Pampapagkl. Para ang buong Pilipino ay lumaki ang may KSP (Kalang sa Sangkap Pinoy).

Hanapin – Diamond Sangkap Pinoy Seal!

Coconut Oil Refiners Association, Inc.

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Nutri-Flour

HARINA DE PAN DE SAL

FIDEL IODIZED SALT

FIRST CHOICE IODIZED SALT

Sa susunod nanyang pamamili, hanapin —

Ang pag-asa ng ating pag-asa.

"Ito ngo mentabanawa, nikolandaw, at retailers na ipinatupad na sa kasibang kampanya ang RA 8976 dhood Fortification Law of 2000 at naglalaman ng mga pagbabag ngayon sa Sangkap Pinoy, adanod sa pag-asang kasibang nanyo! Maraming kampanya pa sana ang gumawa sa iyo!"

Secretary Manuel M. Buyet
Department of Health

Palace bullish on 'sin' tax bill, improved credit rating

By Gil Cabacungan Jr

MALACAÑANG is confident that it has done enough in Congress with the insistence passage of the "sin" tax bill to convince credit rating analysts to maintain the Philippines credit rating.

In a briefing, Trade and Industry Secretary Cesar Purisima said that "what is important is that we pass [the "sin" tax bill] before the ended of the year and send the right signal in terms of revenue that will be generated."

The House of Representatives version of the "sin" tax bill has been criticized as a watered down version because it proposed only a 20 percent increase in taxes on cigarettes and alcohol versus the 30 percent desired by the Department of Finance.

Purisima said that the government has only targeted a minimum of P7 billion increase from next year to 2008 which is not the same amount to be generated by the House version. While the "sin" tax bill will set to go through the Senate and a bicameral process, the final version is expected to yield higher revenues for the government because the P7 billion set under the Medium Term Philippine Development Program.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said she expected the House to pass on even stronger "sin" tax bill "which the House has agreed that they will consider very favorably in the bicam conference."

Wholistic approach

Although the President did not elaborate, she has already proposed a compromise formula to the top executives from Fortune Tobacco Corp. and Philip Morris Philippines in consulting at her Forbes Park residence last week. The President has proposed a 12 percent and 40 percent increase in alcohol and cigarette taxes in the first year.

Purisima said that credit rating agencies were likely to look at the government's "wholistic" approach in solving its fiscal problems that entail not only the passage of new revenue measures but also improving tax collection, administration of cigarettes and instilling economic growth.

"All of this should happen to have sustainable solution to our problems," Purisima said. "This is a signal to show that we are actually taking the hard decision and moving forward," Purisima said.

Credit rate watchers have warned the government of a possible downgrade should it fail to have at least two of its revenue measures passed before the end of the year.

Purisima said that after the sin tax, the second tax measure that could be passed by next month was the Lateral Interest bill which would introduce multi-year to the bureaucracy where agencies that meet the revenue targets would be rewarded while those that fall short would be penalized. "Those that don't meet their goals can either be moved or asked to leave. This is a big help in improving efficiency of tax collection because it improves the ability of government to make things happen," Purisima said.

Coup plot went pfft, says Biazon

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE COUP plot is over.

SEN. RODOLFO Biazon, a member of the administration coalition, disclosed yesterday that the planned power grab through a coup d' etat had already "fizzled out."

The senator said the coup plotters were supposed to have met on Oct. 31, but that only a few showed up.

And the only logical explanation, he said, was the failure of the coup plotters to generate support both within and outside the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Biazon, who served as AFP chief of staff during the Aquino administration, said: "There can be no public support that can be generated [by the coup plotters] and they cannot generate support from the military."

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PALACE CALLERS
President Macapagal-Arroyo shakes hands with members of the Japanese business delegation led by Hiroshi Okuda (second from left), chairman of the Nippon Keidanren and board chairman of Toyota Motor Corp., during a luncheon meeting at Malacañang's Aguinaldo State yesterday. Also in photo is Japanese Ambassador Ryuichiro Yamazaki (left), who introduced the delegation members to the President. MALACAÑANG PHOTO

Soldiers, Moro rebs clash; MILF says it's not involved

By Allen A. Nawal
AFP Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—At least six members of government forces and one Moro rebel were wounded during a 30-minute fire fight yesterday in two villages of Mamasapano town in Maguindanao, a rebel spokesperson said.

Eid Kabalu, Moro Islamic Liberation Front spokesperson, was quick to deny, however, that the MILF was involved in the incident, which would have been a violation of the ceasefire between the government and the secessionist group.

"This incident did not involve the MILF as an organization. The joint ceasefire committees are already on the spot to consider the problem," he said, referring to the 30-member ceasefire observer team from Malaysia and Brunei.

Col. Franklin del Prado, Southern Command spokesperson, said heavily armed members of the MILF attacked an outpost of the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) in Barangay Tuca in Mamasapano.

He said the skirmishes morning the outpost fought back but there was an immediate report of casualties on either side.

Kabalu said the clash stemmed from a feud triggered by the shooting to death of two MILF commanders on Oct. 16.

He said that on that day, police officer Rudy Bhoxan of Sharif Aguak town, also in Maguindanao, and militiaman Datoc Kiko Mandilan of Mamasapano killed MILF commanders Abdullah Hadji Jamjal and Mohammad-in Kusnain.

He said efforts by the MILF leadership to settle the feud triggered by the killings failed and on Wednesday relatives and followers of the two commanders decided to resort to revenge by attacking the Cafgu outpost.

Barbers plea doomed, says Biazon

By Christine O. Avendaño

SEN. ROGELIO Biazon yesterday expressed confidence that the Supreme Court would throw out the petition of Antero Sen. Nolasco Barbers should he go ahead with plans to press for the nullification of the proclamation of the winners of the last Senate seat during the May elections.

"The law and the facts are on my side," Biazon said.

Barbers' camp said Tuesday it would bring to the Supreme Court its case against Biazon after the Commission on Elections junked its petition to nullify Biazon's proclamation.

Biazon said the Barbers' camp had every right to bring its case before the high court but for him, the Comelec did the right thing.

"The municipal certificates of canvass used by the Comelec which resulted in my proclamation were the correct and legal documents because they were signed by the duly appointed Comelec officers," he told reporters.

On the other hand, the senator said the documents that were being used by Barbers' lawyer, Sixto Brillantes, in defending the ex-senator's case were "spurious."

He said the documents of Barbers were signed by Comelec officers who had already been relieved and replaced at the time these documents were prepared.

Nararanasan mo ba ang mga ito:

- Madalas mauhaw
- Madaling magutom
- Malimit na pag-ihi
- Tumutulong kisame

Mas mainam kung gamot ay matutuklasan sa maaga

RiteMED

How did Tarongoy get there? Sto. Tomas asked to explain

By Jaresta Aning

LABOR Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas should explain why there are still Filipino workers in Iraq, despite the ban on their deployment there, Senate President Franklin Drilon said yesterday.

"What is happening to the ban on workers in Iraq? Why do we still discover that suddenly we have workers in Iraq?" Drilon told reporters.

To a similar question posed by reporters at a press conference, Sto. Tomas said: "You know Filipinos have a feeling that they're invincible. Hi[-]ipino kasi strong nerve. Kaya[-]in's nasa mind to think that [a place like Iraq, even if] other has the gun, he or she can be offered at any time because of the number of lower than are in conflict there."

Sto. Tomas also said the government was considering the evacuation of Filipino workers from Iraq.

"We have evacuated workers from the Middle East many times in the past, like during the Iran-Iraq War. The conditions for an evacuation might exist today. On our part, we're trying to cover all the bases. This is your preparation, more than anything else. We have an existing contingency plan for that," she said, adding:

"If the violence continues—and we think it will—we might eventually think of evacuation."

According to Sto. Tomas, the Philippine government will do "whatever is possible in order to find Robert Tarongoy is brought back to the Philippines and to his family as quickly as possible, and in a very safe manner."

"Everything that's necessary to see [Tarongoy's family] through these difficult times, we will do," she said.

4 others

Sto. Tomas disclosed that *there were four other Filipinos* working at the Saudi Arabian Trading & Construction Co.

She said two were engineers and were at a work site, and the other two were in their barracks when Tarongoy was abducted. All four have been accounted for, she added.

She expressed dismay that another Filipino in Iraq had been abducted despite the government's efforts to ensure the safety of more than 1,000 Filipinos there.

"I am, of course, terribly disturbed that this incident has happened again," she said. "I am hoping that if there are still people out there who are thinking of going to Iraq, they will take a good, close second look at that option. Because definitely [Iraq] is a very vulnerable area. We don't want any [more] Filipinos to get in harm's way." With a report from Christine O. Avendaño

AMLC allowed to look into Garcia accounts

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accounts on Garcia including court-martial and charges before the Sandiganbayan for reportedly accumulating some P143.65 million in alleged ill-gotten wealth from 1992 to 2003.

At a pre-trial hearing in Camp Aguinaldo yesterday, Garcia managed to delay court-martial proceedings after he invoked his constitutional right to due process. He said he wanted to examine for himself documents claiming that he had violated the Articles of War for accumulating alleged ill-gotten wealth.

Ombudsman's request

The AMLC asked the RTC that it be allowed to examine the bank accounts following a request from the Office of the Ombudsman, which has filed graft charges against Garcia.

"Finding the allegations in the said application to be impressed with merit . . . the application is hereby granted. Authority is hereby issued to AMLC to inquire into or examine bank accounts of Garcia and his family[,]" RTC Judge Jaime Ferdinand N. Gera said in an order that he signed on Oct. 26.

Banks

The accounts are in the Land Bank of the Philippines branch at 1598 M.H. Del Pilar corner J. Quirino Street in Malate, Manila; Armed Forces and Police Savings and Loan Association Inc. on Ermita corner Gen. Luna Road in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City; Banco de Oro Universal Bank branch at 11 Alfaro Avenue in Salcedo Village; and the Centennial Savings Bank branch on the ground floor of Prestige Tower on Emerald Avenue in Pasig.

Also approved for examination were accounts in five banks in Makati, namely the Allied Banking Corp. branch at 6754 Ayala Ave. corner Legaspi Street; Bank of the Philippine Islands in the BPI Building on Ayala Avenue corner Paseo de Roxas; United Coconut Planters Bank in the UCPB Building on Makati Avenue; Planters Development Bank in the Planters Bank Building at 314 Gil Puyat Ave., and the Export and Industry Bank on the corner of Chino Roces Avenue and Gil Puyat Avenue.

Garcia's address was given in court records as College Street, Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City. His wife and three sons were mentioned as American citizens, residing in a house at 625 Vancouver Drive, Alexandria in Ohio, the United States.

The Garcias were also found to own two pieces of property in New York City—a $760,000 unit in the Trump Park Avenue condominium building at 502 Park Avenue, and a $750,000 apartment at 222 East 39th Street.

APPEALING for postponement of his pre-trial hearing, Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia tells Lt. Col. Al Parreira that he did not have time to prepare.

Five-minute hearing

At the hearing in the Judge Advocate General's Office, a stunned Garcia appeared without legal counsel to appeal for a postponement of the pre-trial hearing, the second step in court-martial proceedings before the actual trial. The hearing was over in just five minutes.

The other night, Garcia submitted a four-page letter to Lt. Col. Al Parreira, the pre-trial investigating officer assigned to Garcia's case, in which he outlined the reasons for postponing the pre-trial hearing.

Arguments for postponement

His first argument was that he had insufficient time to prepare for the pre-trial meeting.

Second, Garcia said he needed more time to consult his lawyer. Finally, Garcia asked that he be furnished original copies of documents on the charges against him, "all of which are not presently available to me and which I need to see, consult, read, understand and study before I confer with my lawyer and be able to intelligently prepare for purposes of the pre-trial investigation."

On Oct. 16, Garcia was served at his quarters a charge sheet of the court-martial charges against him. He is accused of violating the doctrine that governs the actions of military personnel and stipulates punishment for violations of international laws.

Specifically, Garcia is accused of violating Article of War 96, or conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, and Article of War 97, or conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline, for accumulating large cash holdings to AFP/GAI and various banks and for owning eight vehicles, all of which he did not declare in his Statements of Assets and Liabilities.

Forks, spoons, yes; Ferragamo shoes, no

Front page A1

los Garcia, whose assets are near the subject of a house order from the Sandiganbayan.

"The government is going to leave them with the plates and spoons and cooking pots. The [government] is not that unlike," Mila Aguas told reporters in her during a break at the trial of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

In spite of the house order, Garcia, a former military comptroller, and his family would still be allowed to stay in their houses, according to the special prosecutor.

On Monday, the fourth division of the Sandiganbayan issued a writ of preliminary attachment on the P143 million in alleged ill-gotten wealth of the Garcias here and abroad.

Associate Justice Gregory Ong, fourth division chair, ordered Sandiganbayan Sheriff Lt. Cmdr. Ismael Khan to enforce the writ of attachment.

Earlier, officials from the Sandiganbayan Sheriff's Office, who asked not to be named, said Garcia's house and other pieces of real estate would be "taxed" to prevent their sale or disposition.

Bicycle, too

"We will get the copies of deeds to announce a notice of levy upon those properties. But all their cars will be impounded. Not even a bicycle owned by them will be spared," a Sandiganbayan sheriff said.

Attachment orders will be issued on the bank deposits of the Garcias and their cronies by withdrawn or transferred until the case is over, they said.

The writ stemmed from a bar court records as College Street, Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City. His wife and three sons were mentioned as American citizens, residing in a house at 625 Vancouver Drive, Alexandria in Ohio, the United States.

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Among Garcia's assets are pieces of real estate and cash deposits in the United States amounting to $2.2 million, equivalent to some P130 million at the current exchange rate.

US assets

The Garcias allegedly own an apartment and a condominium in New York City valued at $1.42 million and a residential house and lot at 625 Vancouver Drive, Alexandria, Ohio.

From 1993 to 2000, they were found to have transferred a total of $795,830 to cash to the United States. These were not declared in Garcia's statement of assets and liabilities.

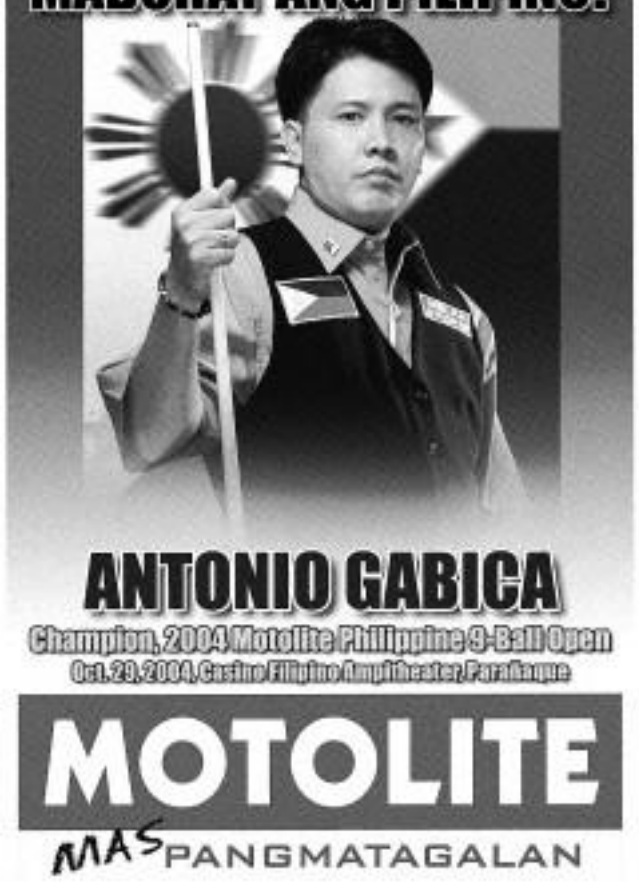
The Garcias were also found to have P12 million in investment in the Armed Forces and Police Savings and Loan Association, Inc., a $195,000 deposit in Allied Bank Corp., shares in LIT Manpower Inc. and LIT Kenanteon Corp., and eight vehicles, including a Toyota RAV 4, a Honda Civic and a Honda CRV.

Explain in 15 days

The Sandiganbayan has directed Garcia and his family to explain why their assets should not be forfeited in favor of the government.

The anti-graft court gave the Garcias 15 days upon receipt of the resolution to comply with the order.

"If you fail to do so, judgment by default will be taken against you for the relief demanded in the petition," said the resolution.



Solons ask: Will Abaya evict ex-generals from ₱12-B land?

By Carlito Pablo

WILL former Armed Forces chief of staff Narciso Abaya evict his fellow retired generals from a disputed prime property inside Fort Bonifacio in Taguig?

Two lawmakers yesterday said that Abaya must pass on this and not as newly-designated chair of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) to make up for his supposed lackluster failure in curbing corruption in the military while he was still AFP chief of staff.

Reps. Abraham Mitra (LP, Palawan) and Rolex Suplico (LDP, Cebu) were referring to 29 hectare Joint US Military Advisory Group property which has been titled by a number of former generals.

Mitra said that Abaya has a good second chance to prove his mettle in his civilian post as BCDA chair by dealing squarely with the issue.

"He should prove his worth and even the squatting generals in the disputed land so as to save face from a forgettable exit from the military service," Mitra said.

Suplico said that there is little hope that Abaya may make a move against his fellow retired generals occupying the Joong property.

"How will you expect him to sue his fellow retirees?" Suplico said.

Joong chose reported to have built houses in the Joong property are former AFP chiefs Diomedio Villanueva, Roy Cimatu and Benjamin Defensor.

Other former generals thereat include Gregorio Camilling, Ernesto Carolina and Alfonso Cepeda.

Current Philippine National Police director general Edgardo Aglipay is also occupant in the Joong property.

Mitra said: "Several Abaya should be reminded that it's the country's patrimony at stake and this is far weightier than old friendships."

Suplico noted that Abaya had a decisive record in decisively dealing with former AFP comptroller Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia who has been found not to have amassed wealth far beyond his legal means.

"Garcia was just a colonel/captain and what we have here are former generals whom Abaya served as a subordinate officer," Suplico said.

The entire property, which is under the jurisdiction of the BCDA, is estimated to be worth P12 billion.

ABAYA

The dispute over the ownership of the Joong property is pending before the Third Division of the Supreme Court.

The retired and active generals occupying the property are organized into the Southside Homeowners Association Inc. which was formed in 1991.

The occupancy by generals of the Joong property was one of the issues raised by Magdalo military rebels in their failed uprising in July 2003.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, November 4, 2004
31st Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Phil 3:3-8
Gospel: Lk 15:1-10

Tax collectors and sinners were seeking the company of Jesus, all of them eager to hear what he had to say. But the Pharisees and the scribes, hovered at a distance, muttering, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." So Jesus told them this parable:

"Who among you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, will not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and seek out the lost one till he finds it? And finding it, will he not joyfully carry it home on his shoulders? Then he will call his friends and neighbors together and say: Celebrate with me for I have found my lost sheep." I tell you, just so, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine upright who do not need to repent.

"What woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one, will not light a lamp and sweep the house in a thorough search till she finds the lost coin? And finding it, she will call her friends and neighbors and say: Celebrate with me for I have found the silver coin I lost? I tell you in the same way there is rejoicing among the angels of God over one repentant sinner."

Commentary:

It's not for a sheep to be anything but itself. How did that one sheep get lost? Sheep will be sheep, you say. It's not that they choose to get lost, rather they discover that they are lost.

We human beings are more complicated: we sometimes deliberately strike out on our own, we even think at times that it's our very nature to be alone. And that kind of thinking even becomes fashionable in some periods of history. Sartre, who said hell is other people, was hugely popular in his time. There is enough contradiction there...it leads us psychology that Sinaloa or recently died of the greatest hero are someone "that is essentially alone and lonely, and from this isolation he cannot be saved ... but through the free choice of ... belongs to another human being. "Ought to wake up by myself" ("man") is essentially alone, they belonging to another human being must be subtracted by someone, and he can truly belong to another human being, he/she is not essentially alone.

We're not "essentially alone." We are sacred beings, but not in the way that those in cults are sacred: either of him or a one-level unit between. We are large individual. We have the capacity to be alone—to a degree. We are both social and individual. If we are essentially anything we are essentially both.

We go but when we think we're essentially alone. Much of our thinking will be the fairy inherited from Freud, Freud's training, and background despite/because anyone think unregistered human individual and society.

More than ever we needs Good Shepherd who can recall us to our true nature.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW; CIVIL PROCEDURE; Cause of action; complaint.—A complaint states a cause of action when it contains three essential elements: (1) the legal right of the plaintiff; (2) the correlative obligation of the defendant, and (3) the act or the omission of the defendant in violation of the said legal right. It should be stressed that in determining whether a complaint fails to state a cause of action, only the allegations therein may be properly considered. Moreover, a defendant who moves to dismiss the complaint on this ground hypothetically admits all the averments thereof. The test of the sufficiency of the facts alleged in a petition is whether, admitting the facts alleged, the court may render a valid judgment upon them in accordance with the prayer of the complaint. If the allegations in the complaint furnish sufficient facts on which it can be maintained, it should not be dismissed regardless of the defense that may be presented by the defendants. If the said areas finds the allegations to be sufficient, but doubts their certainty, it must deny the motion to dismiss and then require the defendants to answer, and proceed to try the case on the merits. (G. Holdings Limited, Inc. vs. Sangunniar, First Division, Metropolitan Leisure and Amusement Corp. vs. United German Planters Bank, G. R. No. 154197, April 14, 2004) BY: R. Vila

Corrections

[illegible] story, a figures story—"[illegible]" Ang sweep 3 [illegible]—ang [illegible] sa [illegible] ng [illegible] sa [illegible] ng [illegible] sa [illegible] ng

Solons want Popcom back with Neda

By Blanche S. Rivera

LEGISLATORS want the Commission on Population returned to the Department of Economic Development and Planning where it can craft development strategies according to the needs of the growing population.

Aligned party-list Rep. Rodante Marcoleta said that the PopCom has not functioned effectively under the Department of Health because of the government's lack of population policy.

He said that the PopCom could not do its job with the meager budget that it receives under the DOH.

"It's a mess. PopCom cannot do anything even because it's under the DOH, and Health is not doing anything with it. It's a misplaced department," Marcoleta said in an earlier press briefing on population.

It should be returned to Neda to integrate economics and resources management with population," he said.

Members of the Philippine Legislators Committee on Population and Development are pushing for two bills, HB 1201 and SB 1868, seeking to have an integrated population and development program in the country. This entails the return of the PopCom to Neda.

Marcoleta said their move the reinvolvement of PopCom identified their lead "more latitude and independence to work" when the agency was under the Neda.

"The DOH will never implement a population management program. There is just the other ego of the President, and the President is scared of the Catholic Church," Marcoleta said.

The PopCom has been an attached agency of Neda until President Arroyo transferred it to the DOH to focus on the health component of the population.

KERRY supporters cry as they watch news reports showing President Bush was increasing his lead in the electoral college Wednesday at the Pennsylvania Democratic Party election night headquarters in Philadelphia. AP

BUSH supporters erupt in joy at the Republican National Convention election night party after hearing reports that the President allegedly won the race in the crucial state of Ohio. AFP

Sleepless election night for Americans in Europe

PARIS—In capitals across Europe, thousands of Americans partied the night away early Wednesday as they awaited television projections of the 51st presidential election, which was shaping up as expected to be a tight race.

Across the continent, US expatriates packed bars, restaurants and private parties to monitor results in the close contest between incumbent Republican President George W. Bush and Democratic challenger John Kerry.

In Paris, Kerry captured the traditional straw poll held at the US New York Bar with 419 votes to 162 votes for Bush. The establishment was understandably jubilant as the real vote results trickled in, with grunts spilling out into the street.

The US passport-carrying patrons of the bar—a favorite with American expatriates—have successfully chosen the winner of every presidential election since 1924, save in 1976 when they favored Gerald Ford over Jimmy Carter.

"It's going to be Kerry for sure, for sure," said Dan Bowen, a US businessman who has lived in Paris for 30 years who was enjoying the festive atmosphere at Kerry's.

In Madrid, a youthful crowd of Kerry backers packed the Chesterfield Cafe, whooping with glee every time a state was placed in his column. Outside several signs reading "embrace our Kerry Presidency" formed with Presidente Kerry).

"If Bush wins I'll cry. I'll do this cause I have to do for tomorrow then...but I'll cry," said Sharon Han, a history exchange student from Berkeley, California.

Across town at the posh Hotel Intercontinental, US Republicans crowded around television monitors between trips to the bar for refreshing beverages to cheer their success.

In Berlin, hundreds of people gathered on Potsdamer Platz, a square in the center of the re-united German capital, to await poll results.

"I think it's important for the world to see we are not all idiots and do care about the decisions our country is making," said Adam Chalk, a musician from New York living in Berlin who was playing at the giant bash.

"It would be a catastrophe if Bush wins again."

As the crowd took in the shenanigans, clueless strips and California wines, the band struck up the Ray Charles classic "Georgia On My Mind," admittedly Bush's theme. The ruinous crowd of Germans and Americans shouted along.

But not all American living in Berlin were backing the Democratic senator from Massachusetts.

A party across town near the tourist area Berlin Mitte was sponsored by the US Embassy in Berlin and more than 1,000 people, including a sizeable contingent of Bush supporters, who packed to the brim one of a country museum's many buildings.

"I'm from the military and as of course I support Bush," said 21-year-old Heather Hunt. Pfeiffer, who is from Ohio, a key "swing state" that could be decisive to the election's outcome.

"Kerry keeps changing his opinion on everything," Pfeiffer added.

In Britain, thousands of Americans and Britons crammed into about a dozen major parties to watch the live exit poll results from across the Atlantic on big screen televisions.

Despite the disconnect of the current at home, the majority of US citizens living in London expressed hope that Kerry would defeat Bush amid record voter turnouts.

"I love the United States, and I believe in the American dream. But despite naming the reputation of the country in the rest of the world," said Adam Scott, a 25-year old investment banker decked out in John Kerry garb.

"It's part of history, this election," he told AFP from a table littered with blue party placards and beer bottles in a noisy central London bar.

Britons themselves have staked more than their personal feelings on this year's US presidential race.

Some eight million pounds (14 million euros, $15 million) have been placed in bets with British betting shops on both Kerry and Bush, double the sum in the last election, bookmakers said Tuesday. AFP

Lawyers leap into fray: Here we go again

From page A1

Less than 24 hours after John Kerry could win the electoral vote while losing the popular vote, the current image of the 2000 encounter. However, Republicans argued the math was dubious for a Kerry electoral victory.

Senator Jon Cord, Bush's chief of staff, asserted victory on behalf of the president as shown Reuters data, predicting Bush would end up with 286 electoral votes—well above the 270 needed—as well as 51 percent of votes from 51.5 million popular votes."

Bush, whose victory in Florida four years ago was a mere 537 votes, captured the state this time with a 370,000-vote lead over Kerry and secured a golden grasp of a second term with a persistent lead in Ohio of more than 140,000 votes.

The Kerry campaign said it would not concede Ohio until all votes, including as many as 150,000 provisional ballots, were counted. State election officials said those ballots, over the ones that essentially got counted at all, might not be recorded for 11 days.

Sense of déjà vu

Also adding to the déjà vu was concerns among the television networks that early exit polls they commissioned had indicated Kerry would do better than he fared in several swing country states in.

Kerry turned to his wife's lawyer running mate, Sen. John Edwards, to show that Democrats weren't about to give in. "We will fight for every vote," Edwards told supporters gathered in Boston in Lynnhaven chilly rain.

With struggling votes still being counted in a handful of other states, including Iowa and New Mexico, neither Bush nor Kerry could assemble the 270 electoral votes needed for victory without Ohio.

In the confusion in 2000, Gore telephoned the then-Texas Governor Bush to concede the election during Network coverage speech. Once he learned the race was a tossup, he dialed Bush back to say, "Circumstances have changed." This year, there was no concession, no calls from one candidate to the other.

No victory party

Kerry never materialized at Boston's Copley Square, where thousands of his supporters waiting for a victory celebration eventually left.

Gore told Bush supporters that the president's lead in Ohio was "statistically incontrovertible," set Bush was giving Kerry "the respect of more time to reflect on the vote count," a decision.

The uncertainty dented what many in both parties hoped this election would restore a clear Election-day winner, and with it a sense of closure, and a beginning of the healing process.

Instead, it could reveal the atmosphere of bitter partisanship, coming after one of the nastiest election campaigns in decades, and as Republicans increased their numbers in Congress and installed Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota.

"Bush is going to feel vindicated for having taken what were really big risks in places like Iraq and it seems at his Rural policy," said Bruce Buchanan, a political science professor and Maguire Bush watcher at the University of Texas.

But, Buchanan said, "Unless he addresses this polarization problem, his second term is going to be stormy and unhappy experience."

Bigger payoff

Republican strategists credited get out the vote drives—the most immediate ground wars over the Republicans—for Bush's successes in closely-contested states.

Energizing the base appeared to have a bigger payoff that going after independents and urban Bush called "deserving Democrats," although the president did battle in the closing days of the campaign.

Exit polls suggested that, among those making up their minds in the final week before the election, most went to Kerry.

Even so, as those in both parties had predicted, both Bush and Kerry stirred many who in all the states where they had been known by fervored, meaning that once again the fate of the presidency rested with a handful of battleground states. AP

Pinoys, expats in Asia party as they watch polls

From page A1

and Starbucks—to catch around if the recent dragged on as it did in 2000.

"I brought a change of clothes," one man in the crowd quipped.

But President Macapagal-Arroyo continued to keep tuned on the economy of what observers abroad readily called "the most important election in their lifetime."

Still counting

"I don't panic over economic issues like that because they are still counting," President Arroyo said, whose stand whether she was for Bush or his Democratic challenger John Kerry. Ms Arroyo made the comments during a visit to CNN Philippines network center in Quezon City around 2 p.m.

But Ubaya was do need reason to cover up my business lingering to make an important speech at the University of San Francisco on Philippine-American relations," she said CNN.T members.

Policy speech

Ms Arroyo said she would deliver the policy speech on May 10 on her way to Chile to attend the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) summit which Bush is supposed to attend along with other leaders of the Pacific rim nations.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye has hinted that the President is seeking a meeting with Bush on the sidelines of the Apec summit despite reports that the US president does not want to oblige her.

The Bush administration had sharply criticized Ms Arroyo when she withdrew Filipino troops from Iraq last July to save a Filipino abducted by Iraqi militants.

Not dependent on personalities

But Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima said the US relationship with the Philippines and the world does not depend on personalities.

Purisima said the Philippines should work for closer relations with the US regardless of who leads it.

"We have to remember that the US is the world's largest economy with GDP (gross domestic product) of close to $12 trillion and it is such a massive economy that it will continue to be very important not only to the Philippines but to the rest of the world as the engine for growth for the foreseeable future and a major economy like this does not depend on personalities," Purisima said in a news briefing in Malacañang where he accompanied top Japanese businessmen who paid a courtesy call on the President.

Major partner

"No one but no one can remove that, no matter conditions in such as the US. Our relationship with them is a long one, our bilateral relationship with them is very important, they are a major trading partner, they are major investment group and in terms of support to the country it will still be a substantial opportunity," Purisima said.

Purisima said the US economy grew 4 percent last year, or about a half a trillion dollars increase in GDP.

Elsewhere in Asia

Around Asia, Americans sought each other out at official election watch parties and at gathering spots for foreigners.

In Bangkok's Phillippine Square, a Democratic Party worker ran and rallied Americans went to watch results at restaurant hang outs like Starbucks Street and Texas Luncrian Bar while a handful of protesters waving banners.

"Just from here in Bangkok, things are evenly divided," "Governor stewart and Bangkok Republican George Pipas, 81, said while watching results.

Absentee ballot late

In Taipei, about 30 members of the American Chamber of Commerce watched results on a big screen television tuned to CNN as they breakfasted on scrambled eggs, bacon, breakfast toast and papaya at a country club.

Kathryn Eastman, who has been in Taiwan for a year, said she received daily campaign updates from her family. Eastman denied polling for Kerry and a conservative father supporting Bush.

"Everyone is interested in American politics and they ask you about it, so it forces you to be more informed," said Paul Bruni, 34, of Washington, D.C.

Eastman said she was worried about problems registering and counting the votes.

"Two months ago months ago I'm absentee ballot and I got it yesterday," she said. "I was really surprised they weren't much more organized."

Richard Vuylsteke, executive director of the chamber, said he saw many more Americans at the polls this disenfranchised and "just goes up" an efforts to ease frustrations of absentee ballot complications or a lack of confidence in the system.

Vietnam

Americans living in Vietnam gathered at the Hilton Saigon Opera hotel to sip Bloody Marys and eat pizza in a ballroom with big screens. TVs blaring election returns.

Though Kerry's stories record during the Vietnam War became a campaign issue, he was largely supported by the Vietnamese, who deem him for breaking ties, Kerry is likely here because he portrayed against the war upon returning to the United States and was friendly to the communist country in the future.

Bush Kerry is one of the best or three individuals in the US that's most responsible for normalizations with Vietnam and the normalization of relations with Vietnam, and/or people that live here in Hanoi, that's very important," said Adam Kidwell, co-host of "American Abroad by Kerry in Hanoi.

Indonesia

In Indonesia, the world's most populous Islamic nation, interest in the election was high because of anger at Bush over the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, but results were generally monitored at home on cable and satellite TV stations. Cable TV subscribers were closed because of the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan.

Pandiya, a doctoral student who, said Barry Kerrowan, a volunteer for a US aid company in Indonesia, "America will be the strongest power in the world, and that's bad if there is no other country to believe it not." Juliet L. Javellana and AP

AMBASSADOR Ambassador Francis Ricciardone listens to Sen. Pia Cayetano and Rep. Allan Cayetano who were guests at the US Election Watch at the US Embassy in Manila.

A MUSLIM woman uses her voice to mock election for the US presidency at the US Embassy in Manila.

MANILA Mayor Lito Atienza, with son Kim, chats with US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone during the US Election Watch at the US Embassy. At left is Manila Rep. Mitos Reyes.

Bush claims victory; Kerry 'no surrender'

"We are convinced that President Bush has won reelection with at least 286 electoral college votes, and he also has a margin of three and a half million popular votes," Card told Republican faithful.

"President Bush's decisive margin of victory makes this the first presidential election since 1988 in which the winner received the majority of the popular vote," he said at what had been planned as a victory party.

"President Bush received more votes than any presidential candidate in our country's history" and will be making remarks on his disputed electoral fight with Ferry later in the day, said Card.

'Uncounted ballots'

But questions were uncounted ballots in Ohio delayed a final verdict.

"We will fight for every vote," Kerry's running mate, Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina, told supporters during an earlier rallying appearance in Boston, portending a Florida-like battle over each vote.

Ohio was crucial to the electoral calculations of both candidates as no Ohio could be given to get the 270 electoral votes (out of 538) needed to win the White House. Without Ohio, neither candidate reached the magic number.

11-day wait

Two television networks projected Bush would win Ohio but three others did not make a call as Bush took a lead of 145,000 votes with 99 percent of precincts reporting.

Ohio's Republican Secretary of State Ken Blackwell said the provisional ballots would not be counted for 11 days. It was unclear early on Tuesday whether there were enough provisional ballots to close the gap.

Bush aides said his win in Ohio already put him over 270. "We already Ohio. It's done," a senior Bush campaign official said.

It was a bad night for Democrats nationwide as Republicans expanded their majorities in the Senate and House of Representatives and Bush defeated Democratic leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota.

That will make it easier for Bush to push his conservative agenda through Congress if he is reelected, perennially making his tax cuts permanent and appointing more federal judges including possibly some US Supreme Court justices.

Bush captured Florida, the biggest of the toss-up battleground states, and rolled up some surprising victories to move within reach of victory. Kerry won Pennsylvania's 21 electoral votes but New Hampshire was the only state were he Bush in the initial 2000 election that he had captured.

Iraq, terrorism, economy

Long voter lines were reported nationwide and few major voting glitches were recorded in the U. S. poll of a presidential campaign marked by deep disputes over the war in Iraq, the fight against terrorism and the economy (See related story on Page A17.)

Kerry had challenged Bush's decision to go to war in Iraq with an adequate allied backing and his economic record of tax cuts, job losses and burgeoning budget deficits.

But Bush's argument that he would keep America safe after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on Washington and New York, and his style as a born-again Christian and "flip-flopping leader, resonated well enough voters to put him on the verge of a win.

Republicans claimed their races only 100,000 provisional ballots in Ohio, many of which would not be tallied valid. Lawyers for both sides prepared for a battle.

Bush's projected win in Florida, where his brother Jeb is governor, gave him a giant boost in his bid for reelection and added 27 electoral votes to his column.

Bush, who watched the results in the White House with his family, including his father, former President George Bush, said early in the evening he was confident of victory.

"We're very upbeat, thank you," Bush said reporters. "I believe I will win."

Bitterness lingers

The dollar lost ground and US Treasury prices hitched early on Wednesday after the uncertainty in Ohio made the market more cautious about betting on a Bush victory.

The lingering bitterness over the 2000 election, where Bush lost the popular vote to Democrat Al Gore but narrowly won the Electoral College after the US Supreme Court stepped a vote recount in Florida, United Democrats gave the order of effort this year.

Intense voter registration drives and keen interest in the presidential race put Tuesday's election on track to draw the heaviest turnout in years. Officials were watching whether it would approach the 1960 benchmark, when about two-thirds of eligible voters came out to back John Kennedy or Richard Nixon.

Heavy voter turnout

More than 120 million people had been expected to cast votes Tuesday which, if forecasts were correct, would be about 60 per cent of eligible voters.

Slightly more than 54 percent of voters, about 105.4 million, cast ballots in 2000, when Bush defeated Gore. This time, with 99 percent of precincts reporting, 112.8 million had cast ballots.

Warner President Bill Clinton's 1996 reelection bid drew only 49 percent of eligible voters, about 96.3 million. But Clinton's 1992 race for the White House against the first President George H.W. Bush brought out 55.2 percent, about 104.4 million.

Chaotic end

The dispute over Ohio proved of a chaotic conclusion to a long grueling night of counting that vividly recalled the turmoil of four years ago. In addition to the problems in Ohio, Iowa officials said that they would do a recount in that state, where Bush had a lead of 11,000 with 94 percent of the vote counted.

In the fight for Ohio, as of 2 a.m. Tuesday, Bush had 2,885,099 votes, compared with 2,584,647 for Kerry, or an edge of 122,452 votes. Kerry's aides said that they believed the vote could be turned around once provisional ballots had been tallied.

Matter of battlegrounds

The uncertainty came at the end of a long day in which hundreds of thousands of voters waited in long lines, and polls were kept open well beyond closing times. The prospect of a drawn-out battle over provisional votes, absentee ballots and even a return to a recount of duals on punch-card voting machines loomed.

As other states fell into familiar places, Ohio became the battleground of battlegrounds that it was billed to be throughout the election season. At the end of a long night of unswerving Bush's teams and his ground game gave him a solid, if not quite decisive, lead.

The candidates spent more time in the state than any other, both talked security, and Kerry hammered the economy. Bush sent an army of volunteers into suburban areas to turn out believers, and Kerry and his allies sent paid workers into the inner city to bird voter rolls.

Bush ran better in suburban areas in the southwest part of the state, and he picked up more votes in the rural areas that he had won decisively in 2000. Kerry mapped more votes in his strongholds but hoped he is Cleveland, but did not get enough new voters in the big cities to overcome Bush's longtime showdown.

How many disputed ballots?

It was unclear how many provisional ballots were cast, but estimates ranged high enough to make a difference in the margin between the candidates.

Ohio's top elections officer said a final count might not come to be ready.

"What I've told everybody is to be calm and patient and relax," Blackwell told a briefing.

Blackwell, a Republican, said it would be impossible to say who won Ohio if the difference between Bush and Kerry is the same or less total was smaller than the number of outstanding provisional votes.

Results in disarray

Blackwell said there would be about 250,000 provisional ballots cast, but only 135,140 had been tallied with the project count as of 9 p.m. That area enough to throw the results into disarray, however. (See related story on Page A17.)

Provisional ballots are cast by voters who have moved, those who are not on registration rolls or by people who had previously been declared ineligible to vote.

Inquirer wires, New York Times

US President George W. Bush (left) sits with family members as they watch the election returns at the White House late Tuesday. With Bush are, from left, Barbara, wife Laura, father former President George H. W. Bush and mother Barbara.

Final results not in but Kerry's army sad, angry

BOSTON, Massachusetts—Thousands of supporters of John Kerry poured into the streets of Boston on Tuesday when they hoped would be a victory celebration for the Democratic challenger for the White House.

But their dreams faded and their emotions changed to anger as the election took it that Republican President George W. Bush remained closer to a new four-year term.

The massed ranks of Kerry fans started massing into Copley Square in the heart of the nation's home city after polling stations closed.

A spectacular stage had been erected against a backdrop of neon and the Stars and Stripes flag, ready for the US and international press. The media was to be provided by singer Sheryl Crow and rocker Jon Bon Jovi.

But as the results—transmitted live on giant screens between songs and speeches—revealed no breakthrough for Kerry and his running mate John Edwards, the disillusion soon grew.

Business came to a standstill in the office of Kerry Edwards Mayors right? Telstra. The rain kept falling and the crowd grew thinner.

"They are leaving because they know the inevitable," said one man, even though a chanted for reason the Kerry and Bush campaigns over the final result in Ohio had barely begun.

Unqualified

"It's a sad night," declared Tim Carr from Seattle, who was close to tears.

"Fifty percent of the American people voted for a man who is unqualified to be president of the United States. It's a very bad verdict, it will take a while to regain our courage."

"I'm so angry," said Paul Worsley, an actor. "It's a new civil war, they're turning our nonsensus and our pride to the rest of the world."

Steven Sandvold, a doctor, called the election result a disappointment. "There are so many ignorant people in this country. George Bush is running our country, internationally but also economically."

Cheers

Sandvold Kenna, another spectator, added: "I'm optimistic that people will make up after this election, change comes when people are in pain." There were some cheers as the CNN television said Ohio, the decisive state too still and when Kerry won New Hampshire, which has since voted for Bush.

No giving up

But Kerry chose to stay in his home in the historic district of Boston and left it to his running mate Sen. John Edwards to pen a brave face on events to the disappointed crowds.

Tonight, John and I are so proud of all of you who are here with us, and all of you across the country who have stood with us in this campaign. John Kerry and I made a promise to the American people that in this election every vote would count, and every vote would be counted.

"Tonight we are keeping our word, and we will fight for every vote," he said.

Robin Welland, who works in the publishing industry, watched Edwards' speech and commented, "I'm worried but I still want to believe in it. I want Kerry to win."

Mary Beth Doyle, a realtor, thought the result would be close. AFP

Kerry's White House dreams rest on Ohio

hoped would be a victory rally in the city's Copley Square.

Kerry seized out his theme song "Ohio" as the crowd began to see his vice presidential running mate John Edwards to pledge that every vote would be counted.

2 questions

Kerry's refusal to concede left open the possibility of a re-run of the legal challenges in the 2000 election in Florida which Bush eventually won by only 537 votes over Democratic challenger Al Gore after the US Supreme Court ordered a halt to recounts.

Election law specialists said to date aide could file lawsuits but appear to try to get the ball moving for evaluating and counting provisional ballots.

Bush lead in jeopardy?

"There are two questions here," said George Washington University law professor Spencer Overton. "One is how to develop uniform standards for reviewing the ballots, and how generous those uniform standards should be, Overton said.

There was another, even more basic question: Were there enough votes in limbo to jeopardize the lead Bush holds over Kerry in Ohio?

Ohio Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell was quoted early on Wednesday as saying that the number of provisional ballots in the state could be as high as 250,000, or much lower.

According to results from Ohio, with 97 percent of precincts reporting, Bush had a lead of 368,000 votes.

Jennifer Palmieri, a spokesperson for Kerry in Ohio, said: "We think that a good bit of those votes will be our votes."

"We think that is more than enough victory to win the state," Palmieri said. "Those votes have to be counted before we know who won the state."

The Bush campaign scoffed at the notion that the uncounted ballots could make a difference in Ohio.

"There are 140,000 provisional ballots. Historically, only 7 to 20 percent of those would be counted," said Bush Cheney communications director Nicole Soxman. "Even if twice that many end up getting counted, he can't close the gap of his defeat in the state. It's desperate."

Democrats have thousands of lawyers in Ohio already. With polls closed, they considered whether to deploy any of their massed "SWAT teams" of election lawyers, a precaution this year because of the close presidential race and the future memory of the 36-day recount battle in Florida in 2000.

A Republican-sponsored suit filed before polls closed in Ohio asked a federal judge to force the state's Republican chief election official to require rules for counting provisional ballots.

Contested ballots

Republicans asked for a guarantee that they could watch, alongside Democrats, as state officials prepare the provisional ballots to be counted. That process will take several days.

Provisional ballots are for counted until after the election—10 days afterward in Ohio law.

They are cast by voters who come to the polls but find they are not listed on the rolls, or that their qualifications to vote are in question.

Even before Election Day, Ohio was the scene of long-lay and complicated legal battles over provisional ballots and other issues. Plans for counting provisional ballots changed several times as Blackwell issued conflicting interpretations and courts rewrote the rules.

US DEMOCRATIC presidential candidate Sen. John Kerry walks out of the Massachusetts State House in Boston, Massachusetts, with his daughters Vanessa (left) and Alexandra and his wife Teresa (right) as the deadlocked White House race drew to a close on Tuesday.

Sis missed Tarongoy's call from Iraq

From page A1

Ullibarri said she became nervous after seeing the unusual call. She said she immediately sent a text message to her brother's wife, Ivy Grace, 28.

Their father, Tomas, said he heard the family phone ringing at about the same time the missed call registered on Ullibarri's cellphone. He said he answered the phone in his room, but it did not.

"Hubert regularly calls us, so I suspect it was him," said Tomas, 63.

The Tarongoys officially received confirmation of Robert's abduction only on Tuesday morning.

An employee of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration initially asked the family where Hubert was. Told that Hubert had been working in Iraq since the middle of the year, the Cavite employee said he was one of three abducted from the Samir compound.

Tomas said the family had not slept since news of Robert's abduction was confirmed. He said he was tortured by the thought that the kidnappers might harm his son.

THE FAMILY of Robert Tarongoy—Hubert Tomas, sister Janice and aunt Edith—wait for word on the fate of their kidnaped kin as they watch television at the family home in the San Pedro Memorial compound in Davao City.

'Unknown militant group'

Ivy Grace, her aunt Hilda and Robert's brother, Eugene, flew to Manila yesterday morning-eyewitness Dayao personnel.

Tomas said the family had no contact with the group.

"To my husband's abductors in Iraq, please release my husband," Ivy Grace said at the press conference. "He's a very good husband. He's a very good man. Please have mercy on him."

The couple have been married for two years and are childless.

By Ivy Grace's account, Robert left for Manila on Jan. 26, saying he would apply for a job, possibly overseas.

"The next time he called me sometime in July, he was already in Baghdad," she said. "I couldn't do anything but tell him to be careful."

She quoted Robert as saying that he went to Iraq legally and was under contract to work for two years with Samir with a monthly salary of US$900.

Tomas said Robert flew to Qatar using a business visa and attended into Baghdad despite the Philippine government's ban on the deployment of workers there.

Robert's abduction only served to confirm the government's apprehensions, she said, adding:

"There has been wisdom all along in the government imposed ban to Iraq."

Daily conversations

Ivy Grace said she and her husband talked on the phone almost every day at 7 p.m. (Manila time) when Robert would call the situation in Iraq.

She said Robert never spoke of wanting to come home, and constantly assured her that he and his co-employees were in a secure place.

She said they last talked on Monday, just two or three hours before armed men attacked the Samir compound.

Asked how she thought Robert would deal with his being a captive, Ivy Grace said: "I can't imagine how he is coping with his situation. I have no idea. I'm just concerned about my feelings for him."

"I know he is praying now. It's his only weapon."

Eugene Tarongoy said his brother had great faith in God.

"He's an intelligent person," Hilda added. "He has practice of mind. He will deal with his situation the best way he can."

Robert completed an accountancy course at the University of Mindanao in 1998. He worked as a cashier and bookkeeper for the Dawn Farms and a trading agency before flying to Iraq.

He is a member of the Junior Philippine Institute of Accountancy, Ingrida Bautista, fourth in possession and Daphne Ice Cheria.

Good sun

Robert's mother Isabelita said the last time she spoke with her son was on the evening of Oct. 31.

She said that in the course of the conversation, Robert asked about the situation in Davao and also urged her and his father Tomas to stop selling candles at the cemetery because of their advanced age.

But she told him that they could not let the money-making opportunity go to waste, she said.

Perez, worker at the memorial park, advises for and his family live in a modest house. He and his elderly engineer his income by selling candles on All Saints' and All Souls' Days.

According to his father, Robert wanted to earn as much money as he could in order to provide his future children a good life.

He described Robert as a very good son who did not forget his parents and siblings despite his being a married man.

Tomas also said that with his sister at Dawn Farms, Robert supported the education of his younger sister, Janice, now a graduating student.

He said Robert's desire to extend more assistance to his family prompted him to fly to Iraq despite the knowledge that danger lurked everywhere in that country.

POEA says hostage may be undocumented worker

IN DAVAO City, the Southern Mindanao office of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration yesterday said Robert Tarongoy may be an undocumented overseas worker.

According to POEA regional director Pedrito Dominguez, Tarongoy's name did not turn up in a search of the agency's database.

Dominguez said this pending developments could mean that Tarongoy has been left the country under a "questionable" circumstances.

He said the POEA had learned that Tarongoy was hired by the Manila-based JS Commerce in July.

The POEA contacted the company but was told that Tarongoy's papers were still being processed, Dominguez said.

An OFW without papers are still being processed technically cannot leave the country yet, he said.

JS Commerce maintains a branch in Davao City and recruit applicants from among applicants at Austria, according to Dominguez.

The government has suspended the processing of travel and work documents of OFWs bound for Iraq in the aftermath of the abduction of truck driver Angelito de la Cruz last July.

Direct hire?

Other sources said Tarongoy may have succeeded in leaving the country through the direct hiring system.

Dominguez said the POEA cannot do anything when an OFW is undocumented although the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration in the Department of Foreign Affairs might still provide human rights help.

Foreign affairs officials pointed out that the Philippine government would not go to attempt to negotiate the release of Tarongoy.

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo is stressed that it was in the country's best interest to work with the United States, Nepal, Iraq and other Middle East countries in curbing the safe release of the seven Filipino who were seized along with an American, a Nepalese and three Iraqis.

Working with friends

"We will coordinate with all governments who can help to ensure the safety and well-being of RP Tarongoy. We'll ask the Iraqis to do everything within their power to do everything," Romulo told a news briefing.

Asked if the government would resort to hush-channel talks, Romulo said: "We will do whatever is best."

"We have to work with our friends. That is the best way of effecting his release. Friends in the Philippines, friends in the UN, so we will ask our friends to see what can be done to ensure his safety," he said.

Told that US ambassador Francis Ricciardone had ruled out any negotiations with the abductors, he said: "If that's the best, we will not negotiate... There [isn't] the force."

Ricciardone, who condemned the hostage-taking, declined that the US would not strike any deals with the kidnappers.

"People should not make concessions to kidnappers. Every decent, law-abiding citizen in this planet condemns the hostage-taking. We are all against it," he told reporters in Malacañang.

Romulo to Abu Dhabi

Romulo was scheduled to fly last night to Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates to represent the government at the memorial services for the late UAE President Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahyan, who died on Tuesday.

While there, he will meet with Philippine envoys to the Middle East to discuss contingency measures.

Romulo said he had also received Cheije Mikiam Mamlo Sinsuat, the highest ranking Philippine official to be taken hostage, to get in touch with Samir where Tarongoy worked.

He said Ambassador Roy Cimatu had been dispatched to Baghdad to assist Foreign "in managing this overhostage crisis."

Ban stays

Romulo said that despite the relative security of Filipino workers already deployed in US military camps in Iraq, the government remained resolute about continuing with the OFW deployment ban.

"I wish to emphasize today that it is dangerous for Filipinos to be entering Iraq at this point, especially those who will be going to Iraq passing through the land borders of Iraq's neighboring states," he said.

An estimated 6,000 Filipinos are working in US military camps in Baghdad, a third of whom are believed to have resulted in despite a deployment ban imposed in July after the De la Cruz kidnapping.

Last week, the government warned stopping "Not Valid for Travel to Iraq" on regular Philippine passports. *TJ Burgonio and Anthony A. Alfeche, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Bishops ask Filipinos to pray for Angelito

THE CBCP/ECBC Bishops Conference of the Philippines yesterday called on Filipinos to continue praying for Angelito Nayan, who was abducted in Afghanistan last week.

The CBCP also appealed to overseas Filipino workers preparing to work in the Middle East to exercise prudence in their decision to leave for employment in the predicament.

"We pray for peace in the Middle East, for God's blessing on its people, and prudence for our countrymen who are still working there even as we call for their return," Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla, the CBCP president, said in a statement.

Capalla, who is also co-convenor of the Bishops-Ulama Council of the Philippines, said the CBCP had received the news of Nayan's abduction with "deep sorrow."

"We ask our people to continue in prayer for the safety of Mr. Nayan and his companions, for faith and hope for their families, for enlightenment for the negotiators, and for the spirit of love to prevail in the hearts and minds of their abductors," Capalla said, adding:

"We continue to believe that in these troubled times we are living in, prayer remains an even whole of the human effort seems to fail. Prayer makes us remember that we are all children of the same God." *Reports from Blanche S. Rivera and Nancy C. Carvajal*

Taliban extends deadline for Nayan

From page A1

confirmed negotiations, were hopeful that the hostages would be freed.

There are optimists about securing a release of the US workers before the deadline ends," Islamic ministry spokesperson Latifullah Hakimi told ABS-CBN conflicts talks between the interim ministry and the hostage-takers but I can confirm that progress is being made."

Abductor's demands

Jawhid Mojaddedi, which had distanced itself from the main abductors, Taliban led by Mullah Omar, has demanded that the United States release all Taliban prisoners and that the 17,000 foreign troops in Afghanistan, along with the UN, quit the country.

Nayan and the two other hostages—Sunrise Flanigan from northern Ireland and Shqipe Haliliaj from Italian county Bluelife province of Kosovo—were abducted at gunpoint Thursday but were freed their vehicle in busy Jamalmine traffic in Kabul.

All three were part of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan's electoral team that supervised the Oct. 9 landmark presidential election won by interim President Hamid Karzai.

GMA's proposal

In Manila, foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo said President Macapagal-Arroyo had proposed to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan that Muslim world leaders be tapped in face-to-face efforts to secure the hostages' release.

She had broached the proposal during a phone conversation with Annan between noon yesterday, to reports watched that the abductors had extended their deadline.

"At about 11 a.m., the President spoke with Annan to inquire about the details on what the UN is doing for Filipino diplomat Angelito Nayan and the two other UN personnel volunteers. Annan assured that [the UN is working] to the best of its capability," she said. "I couldn't do anything but still have to be careful."

She quoted Robert as saying that he went to Iraq legally and was under contract to work for two years with Samir with a monthly salary of US$900.

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PRAYER—(left, continue to) Filipino hostage Angelito Nayan (above) conducted by his neighbors at the chapel of the Cuenterra condominium in Las Piñas City.

FOREIGN Secretary Alberto Romulo (left) meets on Tuesday with the sisters and brother of hostaged Filipino diplomat Angelito Nayan, as soon given their full efforts were being exerted to secure the release of Angelito who was working as a United Nations election volunteer in Afghanistan when he was seized.

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Dumol

Scattered snafus mar US polls, but no widespread irregularities

NEW YORK—Machines mal-functioned, tempers flared and ruddy voters often waited hours Tuesday to join a US presidential contest too close watched by thousands of monitors who expected to be sure.

But by the dawn of East Coast polls, only scattered local snafus had been reported in an election marked first was clouding up to be the nastiest in years.

"So far, it's no big, hot line of battles," said Doug Chapin, director of the Election Reform Information Project, a nonpartisan research group. "We know of no major meltdowns anywhere saying the lines seem people were worried about."

About 50 percent of all voters said they were very certain ballots in their state would be accurately counted, according to a national Associated Press exit poll conducted by Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International.

Expert vigilance appeared to be in order of the day, which in some areas prompted poll divisions and unintended complaints.

In New Jersey, for example, a suspicious substance later determined to be spilled salt prompted the two-hour closure of a Mount Laurel precinct. In Pennsylvania, restless Republican election monitors complained that some Philadelphia voting machines already had thousands of recorded votes when the polls opened at 7 a.m.

Local election officials quickly explained that voting machines registered every vote ever cast on them—like mileage on a car odometer—and that did not constitute evidence of fraud.

In other closely contested states—including Iowa and Michigan—the liberal group MoveOn.org was accused of disrupting local precincts. In Ohio, a woman filed a lawsuit on behalf of voters who didn't receive absentee ballots on time, asking they be allowed to cast provisional ballots. Later, a Toledo federal judge granted her request.

Also in Michigan, the leading US civil rights group filed a lawsuit charged racial complaint, saying it received 25 complaints that GOP poll watchers were harassing voters in the state.

In Milwaukee, police said votes were clashed on about 30 gas-out-the-wire vehicles loaned by the Republicans.

Now multi-server voting machines, criticized by computer scientists and several election officials as susceptible to hacking and malfunctions, were used Tuesday in 29 states and the District of Columbia.

In Florida, a few glitches, including power outages, malfunctioning machines and polling places opening late were reported during the voting.

Votes, mainly in traditionally Democratic-voting black areas, said they had received phone calls or flyers sending them to wrong precincts, or even telling them they were not registered to vote.

In Madison, Wis., a man trying to vote found that his identity had already been used to cast a ballot.

AFP/AP/New York Times

Republicans maintain hold on Senate, House

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush's Republican Party retained control of Congress and was poised to strengthen its grip on the two chambers when all the ballots are counted from Tuesday's congressional elections.

Republicans enjoyed a 51-to-48 seat edge over the Democrats in the 101 Senate going in to Tuesday's election and could increase their advantage to as many as 55 seats, turning back several close, but ultimately inadequate, Democratic challenges in key states.

Congress' most closely watched election saw former Democratic leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota swept from power after a strong challenge from Republican Jim Thune, creating what will surely be disarray among congressional Democrats already smarting from Tuesday's demoralizing series of defeats.

Daschle becomes the first Senate party leader to lose his seat in more than half a century.

Republican candidates have already added a net gain of one Senate seat, and were powering the outcome of voting in Alaska, South Dakota and Florida—where the Republican contender Mel Martinez has already claimed victory.

In the House of Representatives, Republicans were also set to increase their advantage over Democrats, according by a comfortable margin the 218 seat threshold needed to retain a majority in the 435 seat chamber.

Before Tuesday's vote, 227 House seats were held by Republicans, 205 by Democrats, two seats were vacant and one seat held by a Democrat-leaning Independent. Republicans strengthened their grip on the House by at least five seats, and were likely to increase their advantage as ballots continued to be counted Wednesday.

Overall, the tallies was mostly bad for Democrats, who ended up narrowly losing several close battles that they had hoped might swing control of the Senate in their favor.

Republicans began the night by snatching the played seats of South Carolina, where Democratic educator Inez Tenenbaum was defeated by Republican Jim DeMint, a US Representative.

The loss was one of several in which Democrats relinquished control of a southern US Senate seat. Democrats also lost in Georgia, North Carolina, Louisiana and South Carolina, and appeared likely to narrowly lose Florida's Senate seat as well.

In Oklahoma, Republican Tom Coburn defeated Democrat Brad Carson, and in Kentucky, Republican incumbent Jim Bunning eked out a narrow victory over Democrat Daniel Mongiardo.

In Louisiana, Republican David Vitter secured an upset outright victory Tuesday, winning 51 percent of the vote—exceeding the 50 percent threshold necessary to avoid a runoff election in that state.

In North Carolina, the seat vacated by vice presidential candidate John Edwards was also narrowly won by a Republican, as Richard Burr narrowly defeated Democrat Erskine Bowles.

In Alaska, Republican incumbent Lisa Murkowski, who had struggled on the campaign trail, made a surprisingly strong showing against former Gov. Tony Knowles.

Murkowski was appointed to her seat by her father, Frank Murkowski, who earned her to complete his unexpired term when he vacated Alaska's governor in 2002. AFP

Americans also reject pot legalization, gay marriage, back stem cell research

LOS ANGELES—As they picked their president on Tuesday, Americans also voted on a raft of other weighty issues ranging from legalizing pot...to outlawing a ban on lawmakers' serving spirits from retail hooches.

As US voters went to the polls in a hotly contested presidential election, they also weighed in on a plethora of local referenda that varied in nature from being socially and politically heavy to downright quirky.

They included a proposal ban on banner-wrapping bears with food in Maine, to a groundbreaking measure adopted in California that allowed $3 billion in state funds to be used for embryonic stem cell research.

The dizzying array of decisions were among 160 referenda and ballot initiatives that went up for a vote in 34 states alongside the US presidential election in consecutive exercise in direct democracy.

But by far the most widespread and disparate of local ballot measures across the country was one aimed at outlawing gay marriage that was overwhelmingly adopted in all 11 states where it was up for the vote.

"They've passed across the board by wide margins," said Armin Brott Bower, policy analyst with the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), which is monitoring state ballot initiatives across the country.

The measures, almost identical in structure, succeeded in Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon and Utah.

The amendments generally passed with a 2-1 majority, except in Oregon where on last vote an electoral it had succeeded by about 55 percent, early figures showed.

The gay marriage issue drew a wedge between civil rights lobbyists and conservative Christians earlier this year, climaxing in a failed bid, backed by President George W. Bush, to pass a federal constitutional amendment banning the practice.

But in socially liberal Alaska, voters' attention was not captured by homosexuals, but by drugs.

The state's residents decided by a margin of around 57 percent not to become the first US state to legalize the possession, sale and cultivation of marijuana by anyone over 21.

The measure, which would have allowed the weed to be regulated like alcohol or tobacco, was defeated by 138,467 votes against 86,806, according to early official results with about 55 percent of votes counted.

Montana became the 11th state to allow the use of marijuana for patients whose doctors have prescribed it for various ailments, but Oregon rejected an initiative that would have decriminalized the drug and created a medical marijuana program.

The adoption of California's Proposition 71 by a margin of 59 percent to 41 makes the liberal US state the first to fund embryonic stem cell research with official funds, and puts it at loggerheads with President Bush.

The measure effectively circumvents Bush's 2001 ban on further stem cell research so that cures to diseases from cancer to Alzheimer's, prompted by his opposition to the destruction of human embryos.

California's Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger broke ranks with Bush and the Republican Party to support the measure, backed by stars from Brad Pitt, to the late Christopher Reeve, Michael J. Fox and former first lady Nancy Reagan.

But opponents also say that cash-strapped California can ill afford the measure, which will cost around $3bln including interest.

In Colorado, voters rejected a high profile bid to change the way the state's crucial electoral votes are apportioned, a move that could have changed the outcome of this year's presidential race.

The same constitutional amendment would have doled out Colorado's nine electoral college votes proportionately among the two candidates, rather than under the current winner-takes-all system.

Arizonans adopted an inclusive measure that has been lauded by opponents as "anti-immigrant" that blocks illegal immigrants from receiving certain benefits in a state that borders Mexico, by 55.9 percent of votes against 44.1 against.

The measure, among other stipulations, requires public employees to report any person applying for "public benefits" without proper immigration status to federal authorities.

In Maine voters defeated a bid to ban hunters from trapping bears with food or from using dogs to track them hunting them.

But as whose animal lovers lamented the result, South Carolina residents were losing...literally.

Voters there swept away a 96 year-old ban on businesses pouring alcohol from regulation bottles, which had framed down to outlawing serving spirits from bottles instead.

South Carolina was the last US state to use the small bottles, which in fact contain more alcohol than a regular bar shot and have been blamed for drunk driving accidents. AFP

World leaders hedge bets with unclear poll results

TOKYO—Faced with a US election that was still too close to call, world leaders hedged their bets and said there would likely be no substantial change in US foreign policy no matter who ended up winning.

Several hours after Tuesday's polls had closed, President George W. Bush had secured some 'Almighty close to victory over Democratic Sen. John Kerry but questions were provisional ballots in Ohio delayed a final verdict.

Without Ohio, neither candidate could reach the magic number of 270 electoral votes. A serious adviser said Bush was set to declare victory on the grounds that the disputed ballots would not be enough to eliminate Bush's lead.

"It seems that a close race is culminating in improved," Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi told reporters on Wednesday afternoon.

"Regardless of which candidate wins, I think there will basically be no change in the recognition of friendship between Japan and the United States and the importance of the Japan-US alliance."

Israel's Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom was equally sanguine.

"In the case of President Bush and the candidate Kerry, there is no significant difference when it comes to their deep and warm support for Israel," he told Israeli radio.

Indeed, if deep interest in the rest of the world—the US economy and the war on terror—had dominated the extremely close-fought race.

Bush called Kerry a "flip flopper" who was too indecisive and weak to lead. Kerry criticized Bush's "go-it-alone" attitude and accused him of invading Iraq without securing enough international backing.

Ahead of the election, world leaders who supported the war and were known to hug pals at festivals and Ralph's Bible Restaurant had wanted to see Bush reelected.

Opponents of the war, though publicly silent, privately made clear they preferred Kerry in the hopes of seeing an end to US-led interventions. Other big governments such as China and Russia favoured the status quo.

"Bush's methods are wrong but nowhere do opinions lie stark in the Middle East, for few have limited edge above the regime than Kerry who, inside view and misery in truth to Bush's misfortune." Despite his wrong policies, it will be better for the region if Bush wins the election," Khalil said". There Bush will have more to end his projects in the region," said Mohammad Al-Khalil, an adviser to Iran's President Mohammad Khatami.

Many analysts reached on Wednesday agreed with the notion of continuity, especially as a state of war.

"The United States is extremely dependent on China economically, so whoever takes the presidency US foreign policy toward China will not change. It will have to consider China's economic weight," said Lau Yui-Kin, an independent political analyst from Hong Kong.

"Irrespective of who wins, continuity in policy at time of war is going to be crucial and I think institutions of Bush is far better because any new administration, Democratic or Republican would involve changes in personnel, in approach and style," said Farid Al-Khatib, political science professor at the American University of Beirut.

"In a war situation, I don't think anyone can afford these changes, with things this chaotic and volatile already."

For many outside the United States, the crucial question now was whether Bush, if he ends up winning, would be able to restore goodwill eroded by the Iraq war and US opposition to issues with widespread global support such as the Kyoto pact to fight global warming and the International Criminal Court.

Bush ally British Prime Minister Tony Blair has made progress on climate change a top issue for his leadership of the G8 next year.

"That's not an easy issue for Bush to shift on. He may be prepared to make some moves, face-saving shifts to try and help Blair, but I still see him making a fundamental shift of position—not to the extent of signing the Kyoto treaty or anything like that," said British political analyst Phil Pryce-Jones, a politics professor at Warwick University.

Pratap Bhanu Mehta, president of the Centre for Policy Research in the Indian capital, New Delhi, said: "I believe a second Bush presidency will be a little more conciliatory, simply because the cost of war in Iraq is turning out to be high. There will be a little more pressure on such unilateral impulses after the experience in Iraq."

No official comment was available from North Korea, the only state accused by Washington of building nuclear weapons. Pyongyang is widely believed to have put off negotiations talks on its nuclear ambitions until after the elections, hoping for a better deal with Kerry than with Bush.

The fact that the election result could be a while in coming sparked some comment.

"We have a nightmare. We have a 'banana republic'," said Junpei Kubi, chief economist at Mizuho Corporate Bank.

"It's the greatest democracy that's just functioning." Reuters

Obama trounces rival in Illinois, becomes fifth black US senator

CHICAGO—Barack Obama, the son of a Kenyan father and an American mother who rose from obscurity to political stardom in mere months, unseated Republican Alan Keyes to claim a Senate seat in Illinois to become only the fifth black senator in US history.

The resounding victory is the latest notable forward for a man who grew up on the beaches of Hawaii and the streets of Indonesia barely knowing his father but has gone on to become a favorite of the Democratic Party's future.

"What we have showed is that all of us can disagree without being disagreeable—that we can set aside the scorched earth politics, the slash and burn politics of the past," Obama said at a victory celebration Tuesday night. "We can look forward to the future. We can build, and try to stay."

He acknowledged, though, that "I am under no illusion that we come out of this sweeping that all people throughout the state of Illinois agree with me on every single position."

The 43-year-old Obama will replace Republican Sen. Peter Fitzgerald, who declined to run for a second term.

The campaign was one of the strangest races in state history—a contest between a liberal political superstar and a conservative former ambassador who had never lived in Illinois. And Keyes was far from the Republican Party's top choice.

Keyes also is black. It was the first US Senate election in history in which two black candidates represented the major parties.

Before entering politics, Obama was the first black president of the prestigious Harvard Law Review and a civil rights lawyer in Chicago.

The United States has had five black US senators in its history and two since the 1865-77 Reconstruction era following the Civil War: Edward W. Brooke of Massachusetts and Carol Moseley-Braun of Illinois.

Obama was raised by his white mother and family knew his 46-year father. He experimented with drugs and smoked hooked marijuana, got sucked up enrolling at elite universities.

His life, as shown, has been the different from that of the average African-American.

But Obama had the political skills and charisma to turn those differences into an advantage in his US Senate race.

He portrayed himself as a consensus figure who could bring new ideas and rational solutions.

"We stand here as one people, as one nation pouring ourselves into a new America with the capacity to work together to create a better future for each other," Obama said in his victory speech.

Obama's father was a Kenyan student, also named Barack, who studied for several years in the United States. His mother was a white woman who moved to Hawaii, where the couple met. The marriage didn't last long; they divorced while Obama was an infant, and he saw his father only once after that.

Obama, 43, lived in Indonesia for four years as a boy when his mother married again. He also drew included schooling in the Hawaiian Islands, including Punahou School as a boy and reader, and wandering with other children, often encountering stark poverty and illness.

Today, he says that helped him understand the struggles facing so many around the world. "But it also deepened my understanding that you have enough to eat."

When he was about 10, Obama returned to his grandparents in Hawaii to attend a private school. Eventually his mother divorced and left Indonesia to rejoin her son.

During his teenage years, Obama smoked hooked straight for months.

His 1995 memoir, "Dreams From My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance," describes a period when he focused more on basketball than school. He drank, smoked pot, even experimented with cocaine. AP

ILLINOIS US Senate candidate Democrat Barack Obama, his wife Michelle and their daughters Malia, 3, and Sasha, 6, celebrate at their election night headquarters in Chicago, Nov. 2. AP

WorldBriefs

Karzai wins Afghan polls

KABUL — Hamid Karzai has won Afghanistan's landmark presidential election, a spokesman said on Wednesday, after two delegations concluded that fraud could not change a commanding victory by Karzai in last month. A formal announcement declaring Karzai the winner of the vote as the country's first directly elected leader was expected later Wednesday. Still, Karzai's closest challenger, Yunus Qanooni, refused to concede defeat, raising the risk of political instability in a country slowly emerging from a quarter-century of war. AP

UAE founding father Zayed dies

ABU DHABI — Shaikh Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahayan, the president and founding father of the United Arab Emirates, died on Tuesday after more than 28 years at the helm of his oil-rich country. Although Shaikh Zayed, who was in his late 80s, had been ailing for some time, news of his death was a shock to many as the Gulf federation of seven emirates which he had shepherded to prosperity since its creation in 1971. Television across the Emirates cut into normal programming to air verses from the Koran, the Muslim holy book, after the brief announcement. It did not mention the cause of death. Flags will fly at half-mast throughout a 40-day official period of mourning. Government departments will close down for eight days and private sector establishments for three days. AFP

Aid worker's captors extend deadline

BAGHDAD — The kidnappers of aid worker Margaret Hassan threatened Sunday to hand her over to the group led by Iraq militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in a new video which does not flatly allowed the British-Iraqi with an Irish passport state. The captors said they would turn Hassan over to al-Zarqawi — whose group has beheaded several foreign captives, including British Ken Bigley last month — unless British troops quit Iraq within 48 hours. Arabic television network Al Jazeera, which showed video footage of a hooded gunman, said the unknown group holding Hassan wanted "the withdrawal of British forces from Iraq," among other demands. AFP

Arafat's health improving

CLAMART, France — French doctors said on Tuesday Yasser Arafat was responding to treatment and ruled out leukemia, though aides said the Palestinian leader could remain ill or bed in a military hospital for several more weeks. Initial tests "confirmed the abnormal blood count, high white blood cell count and low platelet count and ruled out a diagnosis of leukemia," Palestinian envoy to Paris Leila Shahid said in a statement read out by journalists. It said there had been a "general improvement" in his condition over his first three days in hospital, which allowed doctors to perform more tests. "Pathology tests have shown an improvement in his white blood cell count and persistent abnormalities in some biological constants concerning the digestive function," the statement said. Reuters

Van Gogh kin shot dead

AMSTERDAM — A controversial Dutch filmmaker accused by Muslims of vilifying their religion was stabbed and shot dead on his bicycle on Tuesday, shocking the Netherlands where the murder was denounced as an attack on free speech. Theo van Gogh, a distant relative of 19th century Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh, stirred controversy with newspaper articles, books and films voicing his unrepentant views on Islam after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States. Van Gogh, 47, was attacked near a park close to the center of the Dutch capital in the morning as he was on his way to work in what could be the second political killing in the country in two years after anti-immigration politician Pim Fortuyn was shot. Police arrested a man later this morning after an exchange of gunfire in which the suspect wounded a police officer. The suspect, who was wearing a thin beard, was a 26-year-old man with dual Dutch and Moroccan nationality. Police would not say whether he was directly prosecuted. Reuters

Bin Laden warns of retaliation for Iraqi deaths

DUBAI — Osama bin Laden said in a full-length broadcast of a video, partly aired by Al Jazeera last week, that George W. Bush had dragged the United States into a quagmire in Iraq and warned of more attacks on U.S. soil.

In the video posted on websites often used by Islamists, a month before the US presidential election, bin Laden said Bush had ignored advice against "an unjustified war on Iraq the whole story would be no end."

"The Bush gang [sic] misled him and he put his personal interests above the general interests of America so the New York [blew, many died, Americans money was squandered and Bush was dragged into a quagmire in Iraq which threatens his future," the al-Qaeda leader said in the tape, dated Oct. 10.

"More than 1[,]000 of our people were killed and tens of thousands wounded and more than 1,000 of your people [American] were killed and tens of thousands wounded. Bush's hands are stained with the blood of those on both sides just for oil and to enrich his private companies," bin Laden said.

"Remember that for every action, there is a reaction," he said, adding that al-Qaeda would carry on fighting the United States "until it becomes a non-issue for us."

The complete 18-minute tape was posted on the Internet after Al Jazeera aired excerpts last Sat., in step in which bin Laden issued a warning of possible new Sept. 11-style attacks.

Al Jazeera did not broadcast his remarks on Iraq.

It was the Qaeda's first video tape in more than a year and appeared to be a deliberate attempt to influence this week's US presidential election.

More than 800 US troops have been killed in combat in Iraq since last year's US-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein.

Others have died in accidents and other non-hostile incidents.

BIN LADEN AP/FILE

"Bush removed an old agent and appointed a new agent to help towards Iraq's oil," Bin Laden said, referring to the interim Iraqi government. He said the Iraqi people welcome the United States despite.

US and Iraqi forces are trying to crush insurgency and their enemies were hostile territories.

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US and Iraqi forces are trying to crush insurgency and their enemies were hostile territories.

Fighters, especially followers of Washington's top foe in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, whose group recently pledged allegiance to Bandit bore Bin Laden.

The Jordanian militant's group is blamed for the bloodiest suicide attacks and beatings in Iraq including.

Bush, who ordered US forces to capture Bin Laden dead or alive after the Sept. 11 attacks in 2001, vowed after Al Jazeera's airing of the video that Americans would not be intimidated or influenced "by the enemy of our enemy."

In the tape, Bin Laden also talked openly of his reasons behind the Sept. 11 attacks which killed nearly 3,000 people, citing Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, and said US foreign policy should change if Americans wanted to avoid attacks.

US officials have said they believe Bin Laden, who appeared healthy and defiant in the video, is hiding in the border area between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Reuters

Iraqi rebels hit ministry, oil, security forces

BAGHDAD — Rebels fighting for a US-led assault on their fiefdom and Falluja stronghold showed their muscle on Tuesday with a bloody car bombing in Baghdad, strikes on oil pipelines and several attacks on Iraqi security forces.

A morning car bomb blew up the Education Ministry brought fresh carnage to the busy streets of Baghdad, killing six people and wounding eight, an Interior Ministry spokesperson said.

"We are crying because I'm wounded, but because of my brothers. I was with him and I don't know what happened to him," said a weeping Abbas Kadhim, 33, who was hit in the shoulder by fragments of concrete as he sat in his car near the ministry.

The blast in Baghdad's mainly Sunni Al Dawraa district badly damaged the Education Ministry building and destroyed 21 cars.

Hunters found the body of an oil ducky man killed in the explosion, which scattered body parts across the street.

There was no word on the motive for the bombing, which occurred on the US presidential election day.

With US Marines poised for an onslaught on the rebellious Sunni Muslim city of Falluja and its south, part of a series especially Iraq before sustained operations due in January, insurgents worked hard at showing their power.

Saboteurs smashed the Iraqi pipeline network in Kirkuk, blowing up four pipelines in the north and halting most exports via Turkey, oil officials said.

Monday night's pipeline attacks also sharply reduced crude supplies to Iraq's biggest refinery at Baiji.

In the northern city of Mosul, a suspected car bomb blew up near an Iraqi National Guard patrol, killing two Guards and wounding four, witnesses and officials said.

An unknown militant group holding an Iraqi female woman hostage threatened to cut her throat in a group led by al-Qaeda's ally Abu Musab al-Zarqawi if Baghdad did not quit Iraq.

Al Jazeera television said on Tuesday it had received a video tape from the group saying it would hand over Margaret Hassan to Zarqawi's group within 48 hours. "If British does not move to demands, mainly for the withdrawal of British troops from Iraq."

Zarqawi's group, Al-Qaeda Organization of Holy War in Iraq, claimed the hostage beheadings and the bloodiest suicide attacks.

Zarqawi's group claimed responsibility for the Mosul attack and said in a Web posting that Iraqi interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's harsh against insurgents were "an impossible dream."

Roadside blasts and car bombs killed three other members of the security forces and wounded up to a score in the Sunni towns of Ramadi, Abu Ghraib and Haditha.

An attack, the violence was concentrated in a number of mainly Sunni central Iraq, which includes Falluja and Ramadi.

Dhia Rashid, a Defense commissioner Ministry for Anbar, was among 30 people killed in Ramadi on Monday. His colleagues and family said he was shot by a US sniper. The US military said he died in a fire fight between Marines and insurgents.

A Marine assault on Falluja in April failed to dislodge insurgents and resulted in a kidnapping spree that saw scores of foreigners abducted in Iraq. More than 35 have been killed.

Zarqawi's group, in an Internet video, showed the beheading of Japanese hostage Shosei Koda as he lay on a US flag. Bodies of two more were found in Baghdad on Sunday. Reuters

INQUIRER
OPINION

Make him pay

THE SUPREME COURT has administered another slap on Ariston Desierto with its Oct. 21 decision reviving a graft case against a former chair of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. and five other persons in connection with a $1.9-million behest loan granted during martial law. But Desierto is now enjoying retirement (the lucky dog), so it is incumbent on the present Ombudsman, Simeon Marcelo, to conduct the preliminary investigation of the case "with dispatch," as the Court said in the decision written by Associate Justice Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez.

EDITORIAL

But better that someone else will supervise the investigation of the case against those who approved the loan (ex-Payatas chair Alicia Reyes and her fellow ex-directors of the Development Bank of the Philippines, Don Perry and Placido Mapa) and those who negotiated it (Santiago Dumlao Jr. and Mr. and Ms. Pedro Garcia Sr.). After all, Desierto himself crowed in December 1998 that he had managed to dismiss as many as 25 behest loan cases, all involving huge sums, against relatives and alleged cronies of the strongman Ferdinand Marcos, purportedly because of lack of evidence and a lapsed prescription period.

Prescription was Desierto's primary battle cry in dismissing the cases filed by the Presidential Commission on Good Government against the likes of Herminio Disini, Eduardo Cojuangco, Ricardo Silverio, Marcos' brothers and in-laws, etc. He consistently claimed to have based the start of the 10-year prescription period on the date when the loans were registered on public documents; this done being, according to his reasoning, the constructive notice on the transactions.

The case involving Reyes et al. involved the grant of a total of P3,151,398.61 in dollar and peso loans, and installment $1,483,686, to Seiferts Electronics Corp. in April 1977. On Sept. 15, 1987, the Presidential Ad Hoc Committee on Behest Loans filed a graft complaint with the Office of the Ombudsman on grounds that Seiferts had "no sufficient capital and collateral" and that the project for which the loan was sought was "unfeasible." But Desierto dismissed the complaint in June 1998, saying it had been more than 10 years since the alleged offense was committed, and therefore the respondents could no longer be charged.

The Supreme Court ruling, however, specified that the prescription period should start "from the date of the discovery of the offense, not from the time of its commission," if the supposed crime was not known at the time. It also pointed out that Desierto exhibited "grave abuse of discretion" because he threw out the complaint on the basis of prescription only, and did not even bother to require the respondents to submit their defense.

The Court handed down a similar ruling in October 1999, ordering Desierto to proceed with the investigation of a P273-million loan that the DBP granted two Marcos relatives (both since dead)—Pacifico Marcos, the deposor's younger brother, and Eduardo Bermudez, an uncle of his wife Imelda's. Desierto again invoked a lapsed prescription period in dismissing that case in June 1999; again, he did not require counter-affidavits from the respondents. The Court rebuked him, saying it was impossible for the state to have known of the supposed crime at the time the transaction was made.

The point has been made clear again and again: The law on prescription cannot be applied in cases involving ill-gotten wealth or the national interest. (There are "irrescriptible" rights and actions allowed by law, lawyer Leonardo Barbo conceded to 1998. He said that under Section 15, Article XI of the Constitution, the right of the people to recover ill-gotten wealth should not be barred by prescription or other similar legal measures.) But Ariston Desierto had thumbed his nose at this fundamental logic—and gotten away with it. Even lawmakers who reasonably could have been expected to be appalled by his behavior in office allowed him to escape an impeachment complaint for alleged bribery. Remember the infamous vote of 35-5 of the House committee on justice in December 2001, conducted with cards, whistle and declarations of "Merry Christmas."?

There ought to be a way to make Desierto—and all the others who to this day continue to benefit from ill-gotten wealth—pay.

No place but home

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

BORACAY (Aklan)—"The Ati?" asked Hazel Macibog who oversees an Internet operation in coastal commune D'Mall de Boracay. "They were the original inhabitants here. Are they being evicted again?"

The Ati are "negritos," like Mt. Pinatubo's dancer, then Zambo bishop Gabriel Reyes wrote from Bicol. Macapagal-Arroyo in October 2002. "They're [now] in Boracay since their ancestors," Reyes continued. "Lacking education, they don't have votes ...Help them Mr President."

For most people, "Boracay" is sun-drenched white-sand beaches and roaster dollars. Few know—or care—the "negrito" gave the island's name. Boracay is Bisaya. It means, "The gleaming white sand here resembled water bubbles. So, the Ati applied "boray," or bubbles, with "boray" morning-after.

The remaining 200 or so Ati live in hand-clustered out-of-the-way communities dotted here in little Bohol—a land claimed by affluent and politically wired Step Movements Rhythms et alias.

Antonio Nay, a vet declaration holder, is badgering the tiny tourists, since "some-one pay part of a public tax." Antonio, a direct descendent of generals of local number Inay Nay, Philippine Association for International Relations' new coordinator Angelo Rael Bobot nurses the Ancestral Domain Office in September 2000.

In 1996 recently, land underwent local political kaggitan. In Boracay disparagement by migrants and lack of land tenure security remind one of Mindanao's tensions. The early Italian missionaries in the United States and Australia originated aborigine campus massacre here.

The Ati have become original inhabitants before the "Binayas" or outsiders came and took over. Imperial Visayas recalled in February 2003. "The Ati have no concept of individual ownership of the land, believing they're mere stewards of nature's bounty." Only when they were muscled off the land, did they realize that "Binayas" did not share their views.

Relaxing in a 15 minute-ride from the tourist strip on Boracay's "cabs," tricada hitching two-wheeled tricycles (boos, fares-based on will compete with faster super tanks as one of the island's problems.)

It might as well be on the moon. Few "non-dolers" come this way finishing in a world apart, roofed off decades of neglect and propaganda. Like outcast exiles, propaeller tends to dwell with use.

A National Shipping and Resource Information Authority team anchored here recently to survey the whole island. That triggered anxiety attacks.

There will be missing program use dismissed the info," explained Daughter of Charity Sr. Victoria Ortiz. "Powerless and derailed, their self-worth as human is reduced to material goods."

"Your has name eyes," first Quirino author Miguel de Cervantes once said. Some Victoria and two other nuns, Lydia Philippine and Dulce to Dioceta know that. So, they help a marginalized people jump down boat.

They do not just by projects, but also by involving the Ati-dolls that help them create a modern world. It "symbiotically" interns early. Three Ati adults are now in high school, one in college. More men do normal work in resorts. Women take on Dorothea Linda of the P2.3 billion in tourism dollars down here.

Still reflecting Boracay residents help. Sanitary facilities have been installed. To counter malnutrition, the nuns operate a feeding program for those under 12. Mothers who lack skills in beads and weaving learn new crafts.

Soon, a new will help dyslexic cope in public schools. Most of them need remedial classes in English, Science and Math. Many shrink from the learning experience of being mocked.

Boracay wisdom plus—with the nuns and the only Boracay Datuk Alunan—is set up a continuing medical program. Bids would be determined, remunerated, etc. "A nurse is only as strong as its weakest member," a benefactor explained.

But the most striking lesson the nuns offer is presence: they live among the Ati. Their "you were" to take a bus—only it's more orderly, cleaner and with a tiny flower garden. They resemble the Good Shepherd sisters' lodging in Malate drama or Mother Teresa nuns' hospices in Cebu, Calbayog and Manila.

"Can't their service remind you of the sacred lords?" a friend asked, as we sat in the "you were," Frankford. The other? "The woman who poured a bucket of precious nard on the Master's feet," he said. "Its fragrance filled the house."

Sister Victoria and companions replaced the "first nurse" of sisters, initiated by the Diocese of Kalibo, now headed by Bishop Jose Romeo Lachica. (Boys first born assigned to Antipolo.) They follow up with offices, like the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, for wrongnotion of the sick' unsound domain.

The knotty question of land ownership is rooted in Presidential Proclamation 1 Decree 1801, in 1978, declared Boracay a tourist zone and marine reserve. Public lands could not be titled.

Some years Spanish colonial government "titles." Others dispute can declarations. Most—including Ati—have no papers. Before that, President Joseph Estrada's "para sa mahirap" speech remained hot air. So far, nothing has happened." The descent notes.

Eduardo Inquiman was 89 years old this Aklanon said I relieve he was born in Nabas. "No one owned the land then. We farmed every where...We were born here...and our elders told us not to leave the place..." It was 91 what we visited.

"For many, Boracay is paradise," recounts Vicente Guerrero said. "But to the Ati, it is still home to be reclaimed." The street artist shared Macibog's, to be located strip, agrees.

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Bad news, good news

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE BAD news is the 11-mm slots that were situated in fifteen Manila arenas. Well, they are not entirely bad news. They are good news in some parts of Pierre Manila. One of those parts was the center of Pierre Avenue and Echo. When there was an intersection there, traffic on West Avenue leading to Echo was a nightmare. Particularly during rush hours, a long queue of vehicles would be moving there, or had days going off the area from Echo to West and to several corners away. The worse news was that the intersection in West Avenue and Echo itself was home to monstrous traffic.

As usually happens when traffic seizures in intersections, drivers started using the opposite lane, a practice benignly known as "counterflow" but which produces the most malignant results. The problem there is that the drivers on the opposite lane do not appreciate the thing. There is all too often accidents there, and that is that the traffic cops on duty, who do not want to suffer the inconvenience of enforcing the rules, allow them to go ahead of the others. A gridlock is perpetrated in the cost of rewarding the guilty and punishing the innocent.

That used to happen routinely in Pierre Avenue. Then when Fernando closed the intersection at West Avenue and Echo and put a 2-mm slot on Echo, the traffic cleared. The change was dramatic. Suddenly, there was no pile of cars rolling in the area from Echo, all engines and drivers driving their passengers nuts and their blood pressures up from there running. Suddenly you could get from one end of Real Avenue to the other in record time.

It would have been good news if Fernando had left it at that, or used the concept of 11-mm judiciously. He did not. The honor system here since coded up as fast as vehicles in or near the 11-mm slots. I personally have seen the kind of mess it can do at the intersection of Quezon Avenue and Edsa. To cross Edsa from Quezon Avenue, you now have to turn right and take the U-turn slots in Edsa.

The problem with the is that the U-turns are located underneath an overpass. Only a narrow strip of road is left to traffic. The overpass being a good portion of Edsa, for those going straight ahead to the direction of Cubao, the situation is considered heckless. With the jeeps parked in front of McDonald's and a bunch nothing to worry about, you have to be very fussed through the eye of a needle. On bad days, which are when the rains come, the traffic there is enough to try the patience of a saint.

The very things are, the old system where you rotated your cars before traffic lights now abandoned Mike. Possibly I don't know why it hasn't been restored yet. The contrast between then and now a puzzle.

It's a variation of the Peter Principle. That principle, if I recall, states that in a bureaucratic structure, people tend to rise to a level of incompetence. The higher up you go, the more you result a point where you are likely to prove incompetent. That is the case with the U-turn slots. The more they prove the more they rise to a level of hardness. I don't know why by itself a good idea. By definition, it has become so.

Real estate, and bureaucracy, know when to stop. You don't know when to stop, well, you're soon the fate of those who refuse to give up the microphone in karaoke bars and insist on singing "My Way" . . .

The good news is what's happened in our common parking lot. I've written about it several times in the past. The homeowners' association has been pushing cars right in front of other cars. The argument for it being that the cars blocking the cars rightly parked on the slots are on several and can be pushed away. But more often, the illegally parked cars have moved like weeds and formed whole queues, so that at night there at no space left to push them away. And even if there were, who wants to be pushing cars every particularly in the rain?

I had pretty much given up on it, my tolerance and angry temperament falling on dead ears. I had settled. I had threatened. I had wavered—the last time by saying that if someone had an emergency one night, he or she would be dead before their folk could clear a path for them—but, if at all, to bring them to a hospital. To no avail.

Then suddenly things changed. I don't know if that tragedy happened, however dotted it did. About time if my repeated impositions and those of others finally worked. But sign on the gate one day many weeks ago said the guards would not be tolerated anymore. At the end of the week, it said, the guards would no longer allow cars to park in front of other cars.

The guards did enforce it. Came the appointed day, they refused to allow cars to park in front of other cars. A simple exercise of will but one that gave the sensation of something dramatic. It was a blast of air in a stale room, or of sunny in a moonless night. There were hoots, one, of course, drivers who would be arguing with the guards in let them in. The guards would say they were just following orders...I never thought those words would sound like music—they do, from those jobs they didn't. After some time, the boldest gave up.

I've always said our parking lot was a microcosm of the country, a lesson in how small mistakes lead up to major ones. All it takes is one idiot to let the country wrong and then we're all down all you have a major mess. The exception becomes the rule, the rule the exception. Soon, it becomes perversity, and perversity nature.

Well, we've just untangled it. Maybe there's hope for the country yet.

Teaching: the joys and the laughters

IT was in 1958 when I got my first assignment as an elementary teacher for a Grade 5 class in a barrio school.

I was not prepared for the reality. The school was built on a rice field. It was a four-room structure with a small veranda in front with wooden benches, and for its floor it had the dark, damp soil. Inside are more than 53 dilapidated desks, a few chairs with broken armrests and a single blackboard that was rough, outdated and unframed. Our head teacher gave me some books, pieces of chalk and a Daily Time Record.

All of a sudden, I felt so unprepared and inadequate before the sea of faces staring at me. Immediately, my mind flashed backward to my four years in college, the high marks, the awards and the one semester of practice teaching assigned to me at an advanced level.

But despite the mixed doubt, despite the lack of facilities and resources, I always look back to those days of teaching with joy and fulfillment. The anxiety implanted with awe, the raw field and the ungrowing garden were full of unexplored treasures...sacred cities and shapes of beasts, bath of rose, magic and mystery, and the unfathomable human needs—that stretched my pupils with a thousand visions. They counted the number of days for the school year to turn golden brown, observed how the light grew into twilight and finally, dark.

Slowly, my pupils were able to read the sentence which I painstakingly printed on manila paper; to solve simple problems, to locate their provinces and big seas. Images of those children...the girls in their sweaded dresses, tripping on their bolos; the boys playing rough and tumble games in the school area...are a flowerbed in my mind.

After teaching in the barrio, I was transferred to another school in the poblacion which had the luxury of a building with four classrooms.

My dream of teaching in the big city materialized in 1962 because I was now in school, I was assigned to Manila Section 16, the lowest group in Grade 6.

HIGH BLOOD

Wilma Regidor Torres

MP3 calls like to know the concerns of the environment and others, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, answer their cell's self with their world and with themselves. —Ed.

I was taken aback when I met my "city class." Most of them were "defiant" from the other 15 sections because they were ingenious, overachieved, non-readers and problematic. The group was labeled OC (Opportunity Class). They added, they refused to participate in the activities. Magdalena had eating-like, shoulder-length hair that sparkled with the sun. Boyet had the anecdote of watching Armando, Rodolfo and Francisco fall asleep as soon as classes started. The big boys loathed the smaller ones. Only half of them repeated regularly.

I warned on (put up on class) children but held on after making previous home visits. Many of them lived in squatter areas, sleeping in pushcarts or cardboard-packed floors. Magdalena lacked with water drawn from a shallow well. The young boys worked as newspaper boys.

I vowed to myself to give these children the opportunities denied them. And would you believe that this section was chosen as a demonstration class in English?

Like a hero, a teacher was likewise anywhere she is planted. And like anybody else she can encounter countless problems.

Many factors have contributed in making our system of education particularly in the private schools, for lack behind as evidenced by the results of the NSAT (High School Readiness Test), which has generated so much furor. Ironically, the

The crab in me

If your illness is cholera, asthma, hypertension or some other common disease, you would know how to deal with it. You would undergo a specific examination and, if the result comes out positive, undergo treatment.

But what if you have a mental disorder? How do you begin to tell yourself you have a mental disorder? How do you tell your friends and relatives about it? More importantly, how would they react?

From mental disorders (obsessive-compulsive disorder, I learned of a mental disorder called Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. The TV character with ADHD usually a rebellious, bad difficulty concentrating. He would scream, he would run, he would curse in prayer, for his hobby or for school, and not finish it. He would make mistakes in school exams and homework out of simple carelessness. In the classroom, he would appear as he always daydreaming and not listening to the lesson. At home or at school, he would use straightforward and sometimes meaningless remarks. His teachers would regretfully tell his parents that he showed promise, but he just wouldn't follow through.

For a while, watching TV was like looking in a mirror talking back to me. I would watch the TV shows and relive some unhappy episodes of my life all over again. I worried and fussed unduly to mentions of symptoms in the show and searched those with my own experiences. After several TV sessions, I concluded that I probably had the mental disorder and decided to discuss it with my family.

My husband thought the idea, saying there was no such disease, that some people are simply as they are. I took them, "mad-mad" and "bad-bad." I reminded them of my behavior when I was a child and they said some children are just naturally "malikot" and "matigas." A few enlightened family members were willing to consider that such a mental disorder was genuinely real, but insisted that I couldn't have it since nobody from any side of our family had ever had it.

I wanted to explain why might have some academic and professional knowledge. A classmate from high school, who had to flunk Physics in order to graduate, a BSP manager in Manila, said I couldn't possibly have it since I was no longer a child. Another friend, a psychology graduate of UP Diliman, said I might have had it as a child, but got over it after adolescence. Once time, when I was in a clinic for a routine pre-employment medical exam, I asked the receptionist for an orthodontist and she said there was a niece or a nephew who had the disease and was out grown when I said it was.

The reaction of my family was understandable. Who wants a mental disorder in a family member after all? I was particularly disturbed by the fact that I was about two months of the more substantially accomplished of my generation.

The reaction of my learned friends and the few medical professionals I spoke with was not so understandable. It is true that other mental disorder was first discovered in the United States, and that it is true that Americans are different from us, American medical researchers did not say the disease would go away after adolescence. At least, they said, its symptoms would diminish.

I thought of engaging a doctor but my experience with the receptionist at the clinic convinced me that it might be difficult to find one. Besides, I thought that I was different from American counterparts, thought of ADHD as a child-like disease and would not take the necessary. I also decided to keep suffering alone as with my family since I was causing discomfort. (The word "normal," along with "normalcy," is popular in Philippine English. In a parent survey of kindergarten, if you said "disorder," "disease" or "illness," then you want to create panic.)

Slowly my friends and family to own opposition with me, and no medical help. I could avoid myself of, I decided to look for the information on my own. I read books and magazine articles and searched the Internet. I was able to discover the disorder in a child, how to help the child cope with it, what medications are available, but only a passing mention of the possibility that the condition could be carried to adulthood. (Some recent US research shows the disorder doesn't go away with age and that 60 percent of those who had it as children still have it as adults, and a hundred other remaining 40 percent would find ways to lessen its impact in their lives.)

Then came the treatment—putting a wealth of information on the mental disorder, including the most recent research findings, in my head.

But this turned out to be a double-edged sword. It hindered me as much as it helped me. Certainly it provided me with the means to understand my condition as well as assess the explanations for my character flaws, the excuses I had been making for all the years, and the guilt feelings long fat of failures. But it also threw a spotlight on my flaws, mistakes, decisions and failures. I found myself spending a good part of my day recalling the many wrong things that happened in my life, the many opportunities I wasted and how my life might have turned out differently if I hadn't made them.

In due time, perhaps from excessive introspection, I started having episodes of depression, which continue to this day.

But it's not only the past that was unhappy. The deepest dip into self-pity and self-loathing came during the last few years. One medical researcher said that with the cooperation of the school, the community and the family and some effort on the part of the child with ADHD, he may have a successful childhood and lead a productive life. But many people were skeptical, the researcher warned, are not likely to receive much assistance and thus live a normal, or almost successful, life.

People like me will earn many things, and not finish any of them. That makes us worse than the failures, who at least see their plans through to the end. What makes us feel more guilty is that people with ADHD have a higher proportion of creative and intelligent individuals among them than the rest of the population. All that promise and no tangible accomplishment to speak of or look forward to.

It is said of people with a rich creativity that they pull each other down, preventing anyone from climbing to success. People with ADHD have it worse, since the only pulling there is done inside them, in their brain and soul, and inevitably turned to their very existence. And there is no easy way to get rid of it.

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Jewelmer explains

IN THE INTEREST of fairness, I am writing in full the "opinion of Jewelmer vs my Dr. Z" column piece, "Pirates, pearls and president." The news item there was "Jewelmer and Tuck Pearls Bagnisk attempt to link to anarchy claimed by some members of Indigenous peoples (IP) of Palawan to be part of their ancestral domain and to erase the Batasan situation, both of which are off limits because of the presence of Jewelmer's pearl farms in the areas patented by Hon. Blas Ople-Ongpin-Ramapel. A company-owned nursery is being planned.

Sambilog and Tuck Pearls Bagnisk will have their chance next week to demolish some of Jewelmer's claims.

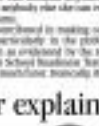
Dear Jewelmer:

We are constrained to address the points contained in the aforementioned article for the purpose of preventing the sale of Jewelmer Investments Corporation (JIC) and its pearl farming operations, rectifying the apparent distortion of facts and misrepresentations made by parties associated with the Jewelmer by vice Ramapel to Dato ng Tikog Peñarubia Tumbling).

Jewelmer has been operating a marine ecosystem in the municipality since 1976. Since the commencement of its operations, the corporation has complied with the relevant laws and regulations required for the conduct of such business enterprise. Jewelmer has been approved as a partner in the conservation and preservation of all but its life and natural resources within the concession area. A resolution with the municipality of Bataraza, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development will confirm that (1) the corporation has submitted all the requirements imposed by said government agencies for the operation of the marine concession; (2) such operations do not encroach upon ancestral domain claims; (3) the corporation complies with environmental compliance certificate and (4) no violations have been attributable to Jewelmer in any point in time.

2. To the best of the knowledge of Jewelmer, and based on the relevancy records of the concerned government agencies (e.g., DENR, the Bureau of Lands and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic

HUMAN FACE



Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

Resources), the islands of Bagnisk and Pandanan, inclusive of the adjoining marine extension area leased by the municipality of Bataraza to Jewelmer, have not been claimed by any indigenous people. Neither has there been a displacement of supposed ethnic and indigenous fisherfolk from such areas considering:

3. The previous inhabitants of such areas were mainly migratory fishermen who did not belong to any indigenous tribes of Palawan.

4. Such fishermen were willingly, properly and legally relocated to adjoining areas of their choice and fully compensated for their property rights.

5. Only a small portion of the 1,200 hectares of islands reserved by Sambilog that the aforenamed areas form part of their "ancestral domain" is bereft of any but scrub and bush.

6. Perhaps, the author of the article (Dad's ms—CPR) has been appointed as the spokesperson by reasons for the request for assistance made by Jewelmer to the Philippine National Police headed by Sept. Sto Tomas. Recently, the operations of Jewelmer have been subject of insecurities for which reason the corporation has been constrained to request for assistance from the PNP. To date, Sambilog has not complied with such agreement.

7. The majority of Sambilog are not land tenants of Jewelmer. Some have applied for a lease of Batasan. Most of Sambilog's purported members are transients and residents of the municipalities of Bataraza.

8. Certain members of Sambilog, namely Dennis Dalit, Jimmy Jaime Jaime and Jimmy Jaime Jaime, have been employed by the corporation as the owner of Sambilog. On numerous occasions, such parties have received the concession area and resorted to illegal means of fishing through the use of cyanide and dynamite. In addition, the corporation suffered loss and damage in the form of coral and reports more due to the unauthorized entry of such parties into the concession area. The local authorities of the municipality of Bataraza will confirm the veracity and records of the unlawful acts perpetrated by the aforementioned members of Sambilog.

9. Owing to the aforementioned acts, Jewelmer, as the aggrieved party, had no other recourse but to request the assistance of the PNP to protect the interests of the corporation. Being the lawful possessor of an ongoing business concern, and to assess the damages suffered by the corporation in the light of the complained and unauthorized entry of Sambilog in the concession area. The statements contained by the PNP's Jewelmer was in concurrence with the mandated duty to protect any person from damage or injury in the course of his duties.

10. Without the benefit of prior inquiry and verification, the author may have been, unwittingly, misled by the purported leaders of Sambilog. We would like to take this opportunity to call your attention to the following points:

a. Jewelmer, through its representatives, together with the DENR and the officials of the municipality of Bataraza, has participated in discussions with the representatives of Tuck Peter Pan Bagnisk in discussions with the representatives of Tuck Peter Pagnisk and Sambilog. During such discussions, Sambilog agreed to make available and process the parties with a complete listing of its members for the purpose of confirming whether such members are indeed members of the "indigenous people" as defined under the provisions of the IPRA Act of 1997. To date, Sambilog has not complied with such agreement.

b. The majority of Sambilog are not land tenants of Jewelmer. Some have applied for a lease of Batasan. Most of Sambilog's purported members are transients and residents of the municipalities of Bataraza.

c. Certain members of Sambilog, namely Dennis Dalit, Jimmy Jaime Jaime and Jimmy Jaime Jaime, have been employed by the corporation as the owner of Sambilog. On numerous occasions, such parties have received the concession area and resorted to illegal means of fishing through the use of cyanide and dynamite. In addition, the corporation suffered loss and damage in the form of coral and reports more due to the unauthorized entry of such parties into the concession area. The local authorities of the municipality of Bataraza will confirm the veracity and records of the unlawful acts perpetrated by the aforementioned members of Sambilog.

"Owing to the aforementioned acts, Jewelmer, as the aggrieved party, had no other recourse but

Send comment to cmdoyo@inq7.com.ph

A conservative country

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

BARNEY Frank, right-wing political pundit, summed up the results of the American election by proclaiming the United States a conservative country. Imperial liberals, built in the midwestern manner, spoke and in the increasingly important biographies (the realm of the political philosophy), pointed to the cooperation of the bigger-for-words was and an demonstrated that of Democrats in Florida and Ohio which is tallied off a lot of late-night counting and a lot of lawyers, but it still went more or less as predicted.

It was a rather unsatisfactory day for both mainstream parties. Increasing optimism on the part of Democratic [illegible]

'Choke development'

THE TEMPEST in Greenhills has polarized the community and isolated the issues. The real issue here is "choke development," not nuisance or religion. The main problem is congestion and over-development, there are too many people and cars converging on a limited space.

From our place perched on the fourth floor of a building, I see smog on the horizon. When I look down, I see roads filled with cars and traffic moving at a snail's pace. It is a long way from the landscape of my childhood. I feel a tinge of regret.

Days was one of the first homes in the area. My dad was one of the military officers who settled their families on the road right outside Camp Crame, then called South Crame. In my brain, grew up with a flock, former friends, relatives and bayanihan as our playground. We played rounders and Indians and took study pallet by work animals. We caught tadpoles nearby and collected coin dung for five centavos each. There was a wide expanse of land between South Crame and Wack Wack, where our cousins lived and hiked from. There was a lake where the farms are do last. And now much.

In the '60s, with much vernacular: an 'enclosement' a shopping center and the screaming of cut road from South Crame to Aurora. In the next two decades, houses began to mushroom and the commercial center expanded. The connections boost brought in new settlers. One day we woke up to find ourselves in the midst of a Chinatown.

Our new-door neighbors sold their property and we were found ourselves overlooked between two buildings. With lack of air and sunlight, my parents were left with no choice but to relocate.

Today, the original settlers are few. The Chinese hold many acquisitions with others still to die. Wealthy come in droves to shop. The Muslim pond with dares lush food and foreign tourists. Cheap bargains, including fakes, are peddled by multi-colored kids engaged in childhood.

Here, compassion is a urgency despite the fact that the area is overcrowded as it is. The conversion of a building over a big stand has caused many eyesores. They are squeezing every bit of space for stores. The real issue here is 'choke development.' They are killing the goose that has the golden eggs.

The name on whether a monster should be built is not about religion. It is about human and cultural sensitivity. It is about people learning to co-exist in a limited space. If there is a Catholic chapel, why can't there be synagogue, or an ashram or a mosh-faith (multi-cultism center)? The same rule should apply to all. When you paint your gate, you get others to do the same decision.

People are calling for a harmony of the commercial center to protest over the plan to build a mosque. Think you. Many are hoping that the campaign succeeds. Let people and city moving to Greenhills would improve the environment. The developers of Greenhills should rethink whether they want Greenhills to be a model of "choke development."

—MARIO MONDEJAR,
amokes@yahoo.com

LETTERS

Growing contradictions

THE BUSINESS community expressed its serious concern over the "increasing population" but wanting a left page ad in some newspapers.

A growing population should be resisted to no end, not a limit. The problem is not in our growing population but in our attitudes and practices. We are a profligate, totally Christian nation. No we are plagued by graft and incompetence. We refuse to follow rules, regulations and laws—they be of the church or of the state. We are a country that encourages and protects squatters, plunderers and tax evaders. We help elect scrings of fiends. We have a growing population, yet we expect the President and the government to provide for everything despite the fiscal crisis. We cannot be governed.

The business community talks of "quality education" but frowns when we "mercenarily impossible," he noted. And this is just the passenger side of the traffic. How about the cargo queue?

According to Tiwa, if the Philippine industry Authority (Board) were only effective in minimizing records, the Bureau of Customs could raise its tax collection from the industry by another P1 billion.

Unless the administration exercises a strong political will, it will not be able to live up to the sacred cows of Tiwa. But then, it is obvious that efficiency in our society does hard.

—EMCOMBO,
Makati City

Whipping boys, sacred cows

a fiscal problem in our tax collection system is the current application of our laws: some are whipping boys, others are sacred cows.

Take the case of the wines manufacturers. The Philippines is an archipelago. Naturally, shipping is a major industry primarily every economic move center of the country. Unfortunately, the industry's freight are also the several cases of time governments.

According to Rep. Ferdinand C. Tiwa of Negros Oriental, the yearly taxes paid to the shipping sector is P82.6 million. As can be gleaned from the volume of passenger traffic alone, the tax payers are "practically impossible," he noted. And this is just the passenger side of the traffic. How about the cargo queue?

According to Tiwa, if the Philippine Industry Authority (Board) were only effective in minimizing records, the Bureau of Customs could raise its tax collection from the industry by another P1 billion.

Unless the administration exercises a strong political will, it will not be able to live up to the sacred cows of Tiwa. But then, it is obvious that efficiency in our society does hard.

—EMCOMBO,
Makati City

Ka Roger's hand in saving tamaraws from extinction?

DAVAO ORIENTAL authorities pursued the government action to put a stop to the illegal fishing which is referred to as Danish, Danggan as "pangalong." Danish, being the habitat of whale sharks known locally as "tumolog," is called the whale shark capital of the world. Jing Montejar, chair of Task Force Sagip Kalikasan, Rosary Kayagonda warned that if the pangalong is not stopped, the whale sharks will leave Danish and put an end to the tourism industry which is helping the town economically. (PIA, 10/24/04)

NGO environmentalists must also push for the preservation of the remaining wild tamaraws which could be found only in the island of Mindoro. According to Inter-aritey Paul B. Abood, in 1998 there were around 10,000 tamaraws that roamed the island's wilderness. As of October 2000 there were only around 300 of them left due to illegal hunting. It would be logical to assume that there are fewer of these beasts today.

If the famous pilot turned conservationist Charles A. Lindbergh were alive today he might have come to preserve the ultimate existence of the tamaraws as he did when he came here to help save the vanishing monkey-eating eagle in Mindoro from voracious hunters. If the national, provincial and municipal governments are doing nothing to conserve the tamaraws, maybe Ka Roger can help by apprehending poachers.

—ELIZABETH PATTERSON,
93 Paraiso St., Parang,
Marikina City

Reader dares Inquirer

DAVAO'S leaders—our leaders, our students, even the ordinary men on the street, are united in a deep crisis. The whole nation cries for leadership—a strong, wise and visionary leadership.

But nobody is providing that. Not our President, who has shown time and again that she would rather play politics than uphold principles. Not our Senate: peopled as it is with many thoroughly unqualified personalities, albeit elected. Not our House of Representatives, the last straw of the tamaraws.

And we don't hear even the timorous and frightened of our land, the businessmen, who have benefitedly remained silent nowadays, wanting the fact that they have first-hand knowledge of how much businesses suffer from government graft and corruption. Despite their incredible capacity to do good, they have chosen not to teach—the time of crisis.

Who then will lead us?

As we look about checking at means to save ourselves from drowning in a sea of problems, why don't we turn to media? After all, media—provided they have the credibility—have the power to move the nation.

Why not the Inquirer? We, with its wide circulation, the Inquirer can move our nation after all, isn't our present national crisis in the nature and magnitude similar to that prevailing in the last days of the Marcos dictatorship, when the Inquirer was born with fire in its belly and strength fledgling, dared to challenge the mighty tobacco lords and oppose calls for an increase in the minimum wage. It wrote "quality" and insisted on paying the "minimum" for college graduates.

The Inquirer of those who signed the ad hits employees "on a contractual basis" and chose their employees of their BIR and other labor benefits? How many of those choice events patronized?

If Inquirers and dominoes are our principal problems. We pray to God yet we don't provide God's children—ours, too—with a decent life. We expect governments to provide protection and services, yet we don't "can't-go" senators, congressmen, mayors and governors. We expect good governance, yet we refuse to report and testify on "unfriendly fires."

—TERESITA L. BENTOSELA,
4 Isaiah St., Bel Air 1,
Makati City

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Across the NATION

Farmers demand subsidy from gov't

SANTIAGO CITY—Almost 100 farmers and fishermen in the province removed their call to government to subsidize farm inputs and stop the over-importation of agricultural products such as pork, corn, wheat and soya beans.

The farmers and fishermen, most of whom belong to the farming sugar Magsaysay, Maraguindals at Mangguyang sa Isabela, asked the government to give way to real farmers to ensure a higher buying price of farm products by traders and by the National Food Authority.

They also asked the government to allocate more funds for the NFA's palay procurement program.

Some members carried their pro-farmer slogans in a street meeting with local officials at City Hall here.

They also called for the dismantling of the cartel controlling agricultural products.

But Justino Uhrid, NFA Cagayan Valley regional manager, denied that there was over-importation of farm products.

"The government, through the NFA, imports rice only after a careful determination of the projected consumption needs in relation to available and projected supply. Whatever volume [of imported rice] brought into the country is being taken to ensure that it will not arrive during the harvest season so as not to unduly affect the price of palay," he said.

Uhrid said the food agency has been subsidizing farm products through the P9.50-a-kilo buying price of palay.

"In the wet and dry season harvests, the NFA is providing incentives amounting to 50 centavos a kilo. On the part of the consumers, the subsidy is through the sale of low priced NFA rice at P16-a-kilo," he said.

Uhrid said the government is studying reducing the cost of agricultural products to help farmers.

In Ifugao town, about 100 members of the Kilusang Mayo Uno and the Danggayan Dagiti Mannalon ti Cagayan Valley staged a rally in front of the public market to protest the tax exemption provision of the Agriculture and Fishery Modernization Act (AFMA).

Under Republic Act 9285 or the law extending the AFMA until 2015, the government would cut to zero the tariff rates on most agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizer, fish fry, aquaculture feed, wheat, soybean chemicals and farm machineries.

Imelda Lacandazo, vice president of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, said the air would deprive poor farmers of better income and market and would likewise only help the major importers in the agribusiness sector and the transnational corporations.

Because of lower tariff on these farm commodities, the traders would rather buy imported soya and wheat as substitutes to corn in the manufacturing of animals feeds, she said.

"In the process, Filipino corn farmers are deprived of their main market," she added. Filomar Tiupo Jr., *PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

High fuel costs hit candle drip traders

By Delfin Mallorca
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUCENA CITY—Many candle buyers of candle drippings collected by scavenging adults and children after All Saints' Day have complained of hurt income due to high transportation costs.

"Last year, we spent only P3,500 for the trucking of the candle drippings, now we have to pay a thousand pesos more for the transportation of the cargo back to Manila because of three endless gasoline price hikes," Luis Manrising lamented.

Like Manrising, said they have no choice but to source as the trade. "It's part of the ups and downs of business. Besides, who will buy the candle drippings from these poor leftovers?"

Rose cooked fish bread up in front of Illuminong's makeshift buying station, which she rented for a few hundred pesos for at least three days.

Illuminong pays P3 a kilo of "charred" candle drippings. Last week, she bought a total of two tons from this city and neighboring towns.

She will bring them to several wax factories in Manila.

Nursery aged children, who gathered candle drippings at night to shield the government by making "lots" 2 a regular school day.

"This is the only time of year when the whole family helps together earn a living. Besides, most of the people were still sleepy. They left the cemetery late in the evening when the rain started to fall."

Elmer de Vera Ilagan, a jobless resident of a nearby community.

He said all his four sisters, very school children skipped classes to help scour tombs for salvageable materials.

He said he soaked daughter of Ilagan showed her father his collection inside a low earthenware flower vases, plastic cups, aluminum tin cans, beer and soft drinks bottles, a pail of rubber sandals and coins amounting to P32, which she said she picked up from among the litter.

"It's good that it rained really last night," Ilagan said.

They started collecting candle drippings from the three private memorial parks in Barangay Ilaya, Ilang, Bajay since Sunday, he said.

"So far, we've already earned P700 from the candle drippings," he said.

The money will be used to buy a few kilos of rice, noodles, sardines and school supplies.

CHILDREN bring their candle drippings to a buying station in Lucena City despite the rains.
DELFIN MALLORCA/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Dozens hurt as ship rams Calapan port

CITY OF CALAPAN—A ship rammed this city's port, causing injuries to passengers and damaging cargo that it was carrying, port authorities said yesterday.

Adelaida Hernandez, port manager, said the MV Marina Perla of the Starlite Ferry was moving faster than it should as it prepared to dock at the port.

Jun Gan, Starlite Ferry port manager, said inadequate breaks could have caused the ship to ram the pier.

But Inquirer sources said the ship's engine crew failed to carry out the instructions of Fernando Maiado, the ship's captain, to slow the boat down as it neared the port.

Hernandez said the injured passengers were taken to the Oriental Mindoro Provincial Hospital and the hospital of the Holy Cross.

She said Starlite Ferry would finance the treatment of the injured passengers.

Three buses, eight cars and a van were damaged as a result of the accident. Madonna Virola, *PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Land reform execs to tap Marcos funds to complete road project

BACOLOD CITY—Officials of the defunct Department of Agrarian Reform hoped for P700 million in Malacañan deposits to complete a stretch of the Sabanon highway that links four Guimaras provinces.

But to accomplish the feat, Mabasang will need to remove from its list of national roads the Sabanon Highway, more popularly known as the Tatlong Bayan Road, in Nabas in Boracay, Rd. Province, Hyperwind Rabaya.

Pearl Bernadas, Guimaras director of the newly formed Department of Land Reform, asked Land Reform Secretary Boni Villa to pipe in funds for the modernization of the highway that connects Buenos town in Rd. Province to Talisay town in Rabaya.

This project will benefit indigenous peoples who oppose the merger of the DAR and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples into the CLR, as unclaimed land processing can be financed by the Marcos funds.

Other benefits

Under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law, all unclaimed Marcos funds will be used by DAR to pay for agrarian land acquisitions, although 25 percent may be channeled to projects benefiting agrarian reform beneficiaries, Arnado said.

The unfinished Sabanon Highway services three agrarian reform communities in Nabas, she said.

The government has been unable to complete these stretches of road, which is the region's major source of markets in Manila.

The reconstruction of the portions of Sabanon Highway linking Bugasi to Bongsod is already entered in construction, after the signature of its contractor, Isaacco Philippines, were stalled last week by a collection suit filed by a local subcontractor.

The 9.6-km stretch of road connects La Trinidad, the capital of Benguet, to Mount Data in Mt. Province. This phase of the project—the centerpiece of a policy to open access to the Cordillera—is financed by an 9815-million loan from the World Bank.

Rehabilitation

The bank also financed an earlier rehabilitation project for Halsema Highway, which was discontinued following the July 1990 earthquake.

The Bugasi to Mount Data stretch of the highway is scheduled to open as an all-weather road in January 2005. Reputable traders said an efficient Halsema Highway should slash 30 percent off the cost of shipping vegetables from the mountains to Manila.

Arnado said the DLR had proposed to finance 718 km of the highway to connect Mount Data to Kalinga-Apayao through P3-million for portions of the road servicing Tinglayan town in Kalinga, and P18 million for the road servicing Sadanga in Mt. Province.

She said DLR and the Department of Public Works and Highways had agreed to share in the cost of completing this phase of the project. Vincent Cabreza, *PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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Bohol touted as next food basket

AGRICULTURE Secretary Arthur Yap said Bohol would be the next food basket of Central Visayas if plans push through.

Yap made the announcement in a visit to the province recently upon invitation of the provincial government.

During his visit, Yap was made the adopted son of Loboc, one of the municipalities in Bohol, and also of the province.

"We will give more attention to the value added paradigm, to increase the profit of farmers," Yap said in a press statement.

Among the products being promoted are prawns.

S&P stocks not packed prawns being produced in Bohol, which he said could be Central Visayas' next food basket.

Probe set of poor conditions at drug rehab center

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO (ITV)—The city government has created yesterday a task force that will conduct an investigation of the escape of 24 drug dependents of the Center for the Ultimate Rehabilitation of Drug Dependents (Cureddi) on All Saints' Day last Monday.

Acting Mayor Michael Rama said the city government would verify the claim of the recaptured drug dependents that they tried to escape because of intolerable conditions in the center.

The escape occurred at 3:30 p.m. on Monday while the 11 guards of the center were distributing food for the 224 drug patients—10 female and 199 male.

All the patients were committed for drug rehabilitation by their parents or their immediate relatives through orders issued from the local courts.

Of the 24 patients who escaped, 16 were recovered while eight others were still unaccounted for as of yesterday afternoon.

The drug dependents claimed that the officials of the center punished violators of house rules by making them do 500 to 1,000 push ups. They also complained of lack of food.

Dr. Benjamin Villad, Cureddi director, denied the allegation.

He said the center imposed disciplinary sanctions on those who violated their rules but making them do push ups was not among them.

Villad said the patients were also given food commensurate to the amount given by their parents every month.

Each patient, through their respective family, would have to give P1,200 a month for food, Villad said.

He said the national government was the one subsidizing the salaries of the personnel while the city government provided financial assistance for the center's water, electric and other operational needs.

ROUNDUP

Drivers nab Army man

LUCENA CITY—A group of tricycle drivers arrested an Army soldier after he tried to snatch the handbag of a woman passenger here on Tuesday. Pfc. Ireneo Cardenal, 28, of Malvar, Batangas and assigned in the Bonny Serrano Avenue detachment here, pointed a pistol to a passenger and tried to grab Melania Candelaria's bag. The caught the alleged tricycle drivers Lito Cortez, Julio Gonzales, Hernan Patino and Jovelan David who were then waiting for passengers. The suspect fired his service pistol but missed. He was immediately overpowered by the group. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

300 passports seized

LUCENA CITY—The Criminal Intelligence and Detective Team of Quezon received 300 passports and travel documents from the house of an arrested illegal recruiter in Sta. Rosa, Laguna during a hot pursue operation last week. Insp. Leo Farago said in a report that the team also recovered a total of all the victims of suspected illegal job recruiter Teresita Santos and the corresponding payments already made by them. The CIDT arrested Santos in a house in Calamba City based on complaints of illegal recruitment. The suspect promised her victims non-existent jobs in a chocolate factory in the United States. The CIDT said 80 persons have executed their complaints against Santos and at least 30 of the victims have filed criminal charges in court. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Rights symposium today

CITY OF CALAMBA—A symposium on the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) will be held today, at the Oriental Mindoro Police Multi-purpose Hall. Guests will be Undersecretary Rodolfo Garcia III and Carlos Medina, chief of the government's CARHRIHL Committee. Expected participants are chiefs of police and representatives from local government units in Oriental Mindoro, according to Sr. Supt. Alejandro Lapuz Mayuga, regional police director. *Mabuhay T. Dinoy, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Farmers assisted

CITY OF CALAMBA—Some 1,600 bags of hybrid rice seeds (Hunking Lite 8 or 9) A variety worth P1.6 million have arrived in Oriental Mindoro from the Department of Agriculture as support to the Government to April planting season in the province.

About 1,000 farmers under the hybrid rice commercialization program of the government will benefit from the seeds, said Rodolfo Valdez, provincial agriculturist. The farmers will pay P500 for each bag before planting and the remaining P700 after harvest time. A bag of 5% -8 seeds can produce 150 to 200 cavans per hectare. *Mabuhay Dinoy, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Boat capsizes in Polillo

INFANTA, Quezon—A cargo and passenger boat from Polillo Island capsized in the town of Lamon Bay near this town early morning Monday but all the 12 passengers survived. Police said 60 thousand sacks of charcoal Lamon was also loaded with at least 200 sacks of rice and empty sacks of liquefied petroleum gas. Investigators said the boat was three kilometers away from the shores of Barangay Cagbay Cruz, when it was battered by huge waves and strong winds, causing it to overturn and throw the passengers into the sea. Passenger Ivan Arvin Lopez, 17, and the captain died until the crews safely rested them in shore. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Confiscated lumber

CITY OF CALAPAN—Forester Purdie Maloloy of the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office-Ponte and police headed by SPO1 Roman de Silva confiscated 800 board feet of assorted sizes of illegally sawn lumber of Lemon, Jackfruit and Langhit at Sitio Bukid, Barangay Sal. Bangalang town last Oct. 23. The lumber, worth about P12,000, was owned by Edgardo Fabonan, 47, of Barangay Ilaguin. The illegal cargo was confiscated while an Isuzu Canter passenger jeepney, which was being driven by Oliver Rivera. The owner/driver and the vehicle used were impounded at the police station. *Mabuhay T. Dinoy, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Suspected criminals held

CITY OF NAVOTAS—Police here on Sunday arrested four suspected members of a gang of cigarette smuggled in car theft, robbery and illegal drug trade. Sr. Supt. Nicanor Yonga, police chief, identified the suspects as Larry Ramirez, Jerry Cuban, Milmedio Requion and Nelson Rosario, all residents of Olongapo City. Yonga said when policemen accosted the suspects, Ramirez who was introduced as a policeman but failed to show an identification card. The suspects also failed to show any document for the Toyota Corolla they were using. Seized from them were two unlicensed .38 cal. revolvers, two plastic sachets of suspected shabu, and two cellphones. *Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Question of the Week

Among relatives, friends and others who have passed away, who do you remember the most? Why?

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Joel Bandasing
Bureau Chief Florante G. Solmerano

Flash flood warning jolts Lucena

By Dodie T. Maliwanag
Lucena City

ALMOST a month after retired geologist Edwin Rodolfo warned that uncontrolled construction of deep-well pumps could trigger flash floods in low-lying areas, government officials in Lucena City in Quezon are embarking on a campaign to educate the people about the dangers of "land subsidence."

Land subsidence is the sinking of land due to the compaction of underlying soil and sediments, hastened by the rapid withdrawal of groundwater.

With the absence of an agency to provide potable water in eight municipalities in Lucena, the extraction of groundwater through deep-well pumps has become rampant. This has been the only option for residents and commercial establishments, but often, the communities are ignorant of its consequences—flash flooding.

"We've seen many pumping [sites] outnumber the number of people in the area," said Councilor Cesar Sabellano.

Close to sea level

Rodolfo explained to local government and barangay officials, as well as leaders of nongovernmental and people's organizations, in a symposium held in September that if too much water was pumped out of the aquifer (layer of sand and gravel soaked in water), pressure was reduced in the spaces between the grains of sand and gravel.

"Water in the clay layer is sucked into the aquifer, causing the clay layer to shrink and the ground surface to sink," said Rodolfo, who is also a consultant of the National Institute of Geological Sciences at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City.

All 8 preemptive measures against flash floods, the Lucena City government will now regulate the installation of deep-well pumps even if these were constructed "legendaan" style.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE LUCENA CITY HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER AFFAIRS OFFICE

"Land subsidence causes the affected area to go down gradually close to sea level, making the area more flood-prone," he said.

The geologist identified the villages of Cotta, Ibabang Iyam, Talao-Talao, Mayao Castillo and Mayao Parada as potential land subsidence areas due to the concentration of deep-well pumps.

Lucena, 151 km southeast of Manila, is traversed by the Iyam and Dumacas creeks and several smaller tributaries that drain the water from the southern side of Mount Banahaw and empty into the Tayabas Bay.

Some parts of the city proper have been experiencing floods after strong rains.

Several years ago, after heavy rain, flash floods swamped the first floor in Cotta. The village was submerged in water deep water despite a newly constructed road leading to a river tributary, according to residents.

Culprits

When a city resident, Rodolfo Reyes, heard about Rodolfo's revelation, he couldn't help but watch the panorama of people fetching water from several deep-well pumps in the place.

"Where those pumps the culprits?" he said. Most of the deep-well pumps were installed by anti-working politicians.

Ofel Lucena, chief of the City Planning and Development Office (CPDO), revealed that in Mayao Parada alone, the city government had installed 105 deep-well pumps as of 2004.

"Our records do not include those given by the provincial government and NGOs, and those privately installed," Lucena said.

Rodolfo urged the local officials to strictly implement provisions of the Water Code to prevent "land subsidence." The law specifies that deep wells with a rate of withdrawal of 2.16 liters per second should maintain a distance of at least 200 meters from each other, he said.

Installation of pumps also requires a government permit, Rodolfo said.

The scientist noted that the Philippines was endowed with abundant water resources, but excessive groundwater extraction could pose additional threats to water resources.

In the dark

In a report, Environment Secretary Michael Defensor pointed out that in some areas, the rate of groundwater withdrawal was faster than the rate of replenishment.

He warned that continuous extraction in critical areas could lead to the deterioration of both the quality of water and the environment.

Ironically, most of the city officials are ignorant of the water code's regulatory provisions, more so the land subsidence phenomenon.

Cute is advised that s he officials were joined by Rodolfo's resolution on land subsidence.

She said the CPDO had prepared leaflets for distribution to residents in low-lying areas, especially in eight coastal villages facing Tayabas Bay, explaining the real threat posed by the uncontrolled construction of deep-well pumps.

City Hall, along with several government agencies and nongovernment organizations, has organized a multisectoral committee to address the issue, she added.

Heinzelhoff, Garcia said, no one can just install a deep well pump, even in his own property, without a permit from the local water district and other regulatory bodies to be prescribed by the ordinance.

Of the eight villages which will rely on deep wells as water sources, two will soon have their own supply of potable water as a result of expansion operations of the water district, she added.

Where butterflies are free

Text and photos by Madonna T. Virola
Maujan, Oriental Mindoro

NOT MANY people who come to Naujan town in Oriental Mindoro to visit Banacon, the oldest church in the province and an hour's ride from the City of Calapan, know that a butterfly sanctuary is just a few minutes away.

For one thing, passersby fail to notice the simple signage of the place.

Though not as spectacular as those seen on television, any nature lover will enjoy the neatly tended butterfly sanctuary.

Ed sweet, Evaristo Ilico, 65, a retired employee of the Department of Science and Technology in Los Baños, Laguna, opened Maujan's latest attraction to visitors on Oct. 24, 2004. The 1,500-square-meter sanctuary is decade what used to be Ilico's weekend residence when he was still working.

Conservation

Pointing up the sanctuary was "Ilico's way of addressing continuing threats to the habitats of butterflies arising from various conservation programs going on almost everywhere.

"I was designed from the perspective of a conservation activist," he said. "It has biological compatibility."

At the entrance is a cab display of preserved butterflies. Inside are, among other items, 17 butterfly species, of which seven are endemic, including the Rajah Brooke's, Graphium agamemnon, Papilio polytes, Danaus genutia, Papilio ceramicus and the Cethosia biblis.

One can also learn from a variety of ornamental plants, flowering and fruit-bearing trees, bamboo fences, dispersed termites and subterranean colonies.

"The interesting thing about the termite colonies is that they promote a demanding situation concerning termite and human conflict," Ilico said.

"Ilico ants are their enemies in controlling termites without the use of pesticides. It is said that termites have been able to survive over 250 million years due to highly structured colonies, which enable them to move more efficiently to changing environments. There must be some organisms which man should find to control termites."

"We have no commodity for sale. We sell social goods, such as out-of-classroom education on environment conservation" and help to educate the visitors further through their personal contact with people, said Ilico.

The best time to visit the butterfly sanctuary is during sunny days.

"All insects are cold-blooded and cannot internally regulate their body temperature. A butterfly will readily bask in the sun when it is warm, but not [at] more than 30 degrees Celsius. They stay in a shady area when it is cloudy though few are seen outside on cloudy days or cool off if it is very hot," said Ilico.

Luxury tourism

Ilico traces the idea of establishing a butterfly sanctuary to 1982 in Puerto Galera, when he recommended to the municipal council the conservation of the ecology as part of improving eco-tourism efforts.

"Surprisingly, the then Ministry of Tourism, which was forcibly introducing mediterranean or luxury tourism in Puerto Galera, and the Mindoro Integrated Rural Development Office, assigned to make World Bank-funded master tourism plan, retreated to Manila," said Ilico.

"I was a commissioner that my profession would compliment my vocation of concern for the wildlife," he said.

Ilico plans to extend "both the area [and] the philosophy of the sanctuary."

"A brochure will be distributed to local institutions to demonstrate what can be done with low budget and help spread the concept of a patient and responsible conservancy," he said.

Expansion plans

If plans push through, the sanctuary will erect some three hectares of upland property at the foot of the Crame Hill, beyond the Banacon.

Ilico said another sanctuary could be put up for Pinamalayan Orientalis Mindoro.

"Those who wish to pay say a private luxury fly conservancy should bear, in the court, a defined commercial option and start building business capability. Commercialization related to the sanctuary calls for expertise, knowledge and attitude peculiar to the business world," he advised.

Wildlife ecology is sensitive in nature like investments to any ecosystem that can allow it considerable and cause undesirable impact, he said, referring to a "special interest tourism for special interested clients."

He refrained from using what he called the much-abused term "eco-tourism," which, he claimed, was popularized by environment tourism organizations as a convenient marketing tool.

"In reality, it is mass tourism," Ilico stressed.

More farmers going organic, says agri exec

BAGUIO CITY—Some Benguet farmers are now using organic materials to enhance the yield of upland vegetables, Adonacio Cossio, chief of the Baguio pesticide analytical laboratory of the Bureau of Plant and Industry said.

She said farmers have stopped using pesticides because they have become more aware of the harmful effects of chemicals.

She also said farmers are starting less from growing vegetables because of the high cost of chemical pesticides in the market.

Residue

Thus, they have resorted to organic farming by using compost materials and chicken manure for their crops, she said.

From January to September this year, the BPI analyzed and tested 130 vegetables from different farming towns in Benguet and found that 21 percent of these crops had levels of chemical residue that are below those in farms that continue to use chemical pesticides.

Maximum residue level refers to the maximum concentration of chemical residue resulting from the use of recommended amount of pesticides.

The vegetables that were tested included Chinese cabbage, potato, carrots and celery from the farming towns of Atok, Bagulin, Natubleng and from the trading post of La Trinidad, all in Benguet.

Patricia Asuncion, chief of the Department of Agriculture's agri-business division, said the sale of pesticides went down like you and this had alarmed chemical companies.

He said despite the farmers' refusal to use pesticides, chemical companies have been aggressively advertising their products even to farm lands. Most of the chemical companies are multinational firms or their subsidiaries.

No billboards

In Atok, an entrepreneur was arrested illustrating chemical companies from posting their billboards in farm lands, Asuncion said.

"The farmers may allow the posting up of billboards but the local government cannot. Farmers are advised not to allow these companies to Guerrilla the billboards especially if they are not using the chemical in their farms," he said. *Desiree Caduma, PhilStar/Northern Luzon Bureau*

ORDINARY HOME
Rep. Herminia Ramiro and husband Lito scour reporters in their rooms in Cauit, Masbate City following accusations that the congresswoman amassed ill-gotten wealth and had a mansion built in the city.

Hunt for Yamashita gold leads to death

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—One of the four people digging for the fabled Yamashita treasure supposedly buried in Polomolok, South Cotabato died when the hole they were digging collapsed on Monday afternoon, police said yesterday.

SPO2 Nestor Jayoma, Polomolok police investigator, identified the victim as a Boy Sandoval of Palo village, also in Polomolok.

Jayoma said based on police investigation, Sandoval and his three companions had already dug a 30-foot deep hole in search of the fabled treasure.

It was during this time that Sandoval's three companions saw one of the hole to take a rest, according to Jayoma.

He said as soon as they got out of the hole, the soil collapsed, burying Sandoval.

Jayoma said the three other treasure hunters tried to rescue the victim but only managed to unearth his lone phone an hour later.

He said police did not find any indication of foul play in the incident although the three other treasure hunters would be investigated for digging without the necessary clearances. *Agudilo Z. Fonte, PhilStar/Soccsksargen Bureau*

Court junks graft rap vs gov't docs

By Ilen Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—The municipal trial court of Dumaguete City has dismissed all the five criminal cases against four government doctors and a hospital supply officer accused of graft for establishing a private cooperative drugstore inside the compound of the Negros Oriental Provincial Hospital.

Cleared in a seven-page decision of MTC Judge Frederick Montes for lack of evidence were pediatrician Zenaida Jamp, anesthesiologist Myrna Fuentes, surgeon Hilly Ty, radiologist Teresito Grisma and supply officer Vic Vincent Balocbaq.

The case against the five government employees was filed by former Negros Oriental provincial board members Farnewith Ng and Orlando Penicillo who accused the four of violating Section 3(e) Republic Act 9713 or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees.

The complaint alleged that the operation of the cooperative private drugstore inside the hospital compound was opposed to the interest of the official hospital pharmacy and was in conflict with their official duties in the hospital.

In his decision, Montes said that Ng, who was a prosecution witness, failed to substantiate the allegations in the criminal complaint.

Earlier, the same defendants were cleared by the Court of Appeals of the administrative aspect of the case.

METRO
Editor Ernie G. Dipasupil ■ Assistant Editor Conan B. Bibe

Cops, beware: Big brother's watching

LUNCH break for these traffic enforcers of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority means taking it easy at the Edsa-Crossing intersection in Mandaluyong City. (Jose de Luna)

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

A WARNING to all policemen caught red-doing their jobs: some of your fellow police men shall be watching over you.

Special project groups of policemen under Chief Supt. Ogilvan are now being organized to regularly inspect and evaluate the performance of their colleagues.

National Capital Region Police Office director Avelino Razon Jr. said the special groups would be assigned to regularly check on the deployment of beat patrols as part of intensified police mobility.

Apart from regular inspections, the groups shall also conduct surprise visits, especially at night, Razon added.

There are now 46 checkpoints deployed all over the metropolis, apart from the regular patrols.

Although the program received positive feedback from some motorists, commuters and even some policemen, reports on intense caught sleeping or drinking liquor inside police stations persist.

Also to be monitored are the Oplan Aljunot are unit preparedness, police community relations, and metic the use of police funds, a cause of instruction from the NCRPO said.

The special project group shall be headed by the deputy regional director for operations or the regional lead.

There will be two teams under him: one concerned ing on inspection, the other, on police internal evaluation.

Police directors shall also organize their own special project groups.

Northern Police District police director Nor Pering said they had already sent out teams to inspect the deployment of their beat patrols.

But he said these inspections would formally become "operational and official" with the organization of the special project groups.

This would also give police officials the mandate to hold irresponsible policemen accountable, he added.

Apart from Oplan Aljunot, operation of Metropolitan Manila to check on alleged extortion activities of policemen would also continue, Razon added.

Traffic aides for Pasig

By Lolgie A. del Puerto

MAYOR announces rollout. ties the country is facing. Pasig City doesn't intend to feel the pinch, and is expanding services to its constituents by hiring 400 traffic enforcers.

Pasig already has 200 traffic aides under round out in their dark blue uniforms in northern Kalsada of the city.

Mayor Vicente Xandeo said the new recruits would help manage the flow of traffic in the city especially as get heavier as the Christmas season approaches.

Pasig's capabilities to lure many workers when other cities are looking for ways to cut costs can be explained by its gigantic revenues, estimated at P3 billion annually.

One of the richest cities in Metro Manila, the local government center's office is expected to get heavier as the Christmas season approaches.

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New school for Tondo tutor

By Tarra Y. Quismundo

MAYETTE has change of heart. Alma Blas, former principal of Lakandula High School in Tondo, Manila, has no desire but to accept her transfer to another school.

Blas had been reassigned to Balagtas High School in the same district to relieve the tension that had built up in her former school because of her decision to promote the school canteen.

The Manila Division of City Schools has denied Blas' request to recall her transfer, after she had changed her mind and appealed to be retained at Lakandula.

"Your transfer to that school has been effected in the interest of the service. It should be emphasized that our reassignment is not punitive," school division superintendent Mr. Lilibeth Quiñones said in her decision.

Blas, on leave until January, had asked the school division to assign her back to Lakandula where she served for four years, after she was given her reassignment order to Balagtas High School.

Once she gets back from her vacation, Blas would have to serve as Balagtas principal and switch places with Chimpanzée Cuenda, formerly of Balagtas and now principal of Lakandula. In the meantime, Prudencia Hipolito-Ines of the Antonio Villegas High School-Main would act as concurrent principal for Balagtas while Blas is on leave.

In recalling her request for a transfer, Blas cited that such an appeal was "against her will." She also blamed the school division for her predicament, saying that "the problem went out of proportion" because of the "delayed release" of the school division's decision.

Her retraction came five days after she filed her request to be transferred. Blas said she did so since she was concerned about the students' welfare. "Even if you did not request a transfer, the division would still have been constrained to reassign you, considering the animosity generated by the conflict between you and a sizeable number of teachers," Quiñones' decision said.

No dry-run sans permit for Makati fun houses

By Marginal C. Ortiz

THE MAKATI City government yesterday warned owners of all new business establishments against conducting "soft openings" without a mayor's permit.

Mayor Jejomar Binay Jr. said around the new policy following reports from the City Administrator's Office that several establishments, including badminton courts, fun restaurants, cocktail lounges, and other entertainment centers had been found operating without the necessary permits.

Binay said the owners justified their operations by assuring that they were only during dry runs to fine-tune their facilities before the formal opening.

The mayor recently ordered the closure of 11 establishments located in the city's Central Business District for operating without a permit.

Full compliance

The establishments will remain closed until they have fully complied with the city government's requirements and have paid the corresponding fines, including fines from cabarets made before the closure.

'Missing' Blanca witnesses appear before DOJ

By Philip C. Tubeza

THREE of the four witnesses in the Nida Blanca murder case earlier reported missing yesterday showed up at the Department of Justice and promised to help the government prosecute the case.

Jacky Alvarez, Rolando Cabrera, and Onofre Medina denied that they were in hiding and said they were willing to cooperate with government prosecutors.

"It's not true that we were hiding. They could have checked on me at my home," Cabrera told reporters.

The National Bureau of Investigation earlier said it launched a manhunt against them after claiming that they had gone missing.

However, those who conducted the "manhunt" did not identify the witnesses. Only the Northern Dabels Security Agency, where Alvarez, Cabrera and Medina worked as watchmen at the time of Blanca's murder.

Alvarez is still working at the agency but Cabrera and Medina had changed jobs after they failed to renew their security guard license due to lack of money.

Nonetheless, the owner of the security agency, Eduardo Lim, said he knew where they could be found and added that he could have just asked him for their whereabouts.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said he was still reviewing the sworn statements of the three witnesses to determine if they could help the government in its planned appeal to reverse the previous acquittal principal suspect Red Lamar Gozale, who has fled to the United States.

"I'm still studying if they are really vital witnesses. If I find that their statements are not vital, then we won't use their testimony," Gonzalez said.

He hit, the three men's statements said they noticed nothing significant during their watch, he added.

They had worked as security guards at the Atlanta Centre Building in Ortigas from where Blanca was killed on Nov. 7, 2001.

Gonzalez said the NBI might have been mistaken in declaring that the three witnesses were missing.

"Nobody's perfect. Maybe the NBI was busy with something else," Gonzalez said.

New Balara filters produce more water

By Tina G. Santos

MORE drinking water will be available.

This was the assurance by Manila Water Company to residents yesterday after it inaugurated a P25-million automatic treatment system at its Filtration Plant 1 in Balara, Quezon City, yesterday.

The Manila-led water and wastewater concessionaire, which services the east zone of Metro Manila and parts of Rizal, said the new addition to technology would increase the additional 95 million liters per day (MLD) of water each day.

It will also be used to recover 10 MLD of backwash water for processing into potable water.

"The commissioning of the accelerator and water recovery facility will enable additional water to be impounded and utilized for drinking water. We now have the facility to maximize all the water we get and process it to drinking water," Antonio Aquino, president of Manila Water, said.

In the past, backwash water, which was used to clean filter beds in Balara, was simply dumped into a creek.

Backwashing is done to clean the filter beds that are clogged with mud and other solids.

The accelerator system Balara can more processing time from four hours to three hours, which will enable it to run 95 MLD additional water supply which are can distribute to 300 more households in the east zone," Aquino added.

Aquino said the accelerator was part of the firm's effort to boost water supply in its service area by 50 percent in the next three years.

With Alfredo Lim says the Manila police got the wrong suspect in the killing of the actress, Police Chief Superintendent Supt. Moises Martinez).

According to the police general turned policeman, suspect Jun Melicado was a mere decoy.

Melicado was in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan when Martinez was shot dead in front of his office police station, Lim added.

Police said they picked up Melicado based on the testimony of two witnesses.

They said Melicado was at the scene of the crime.

But the former Manila police chief said that a human rights lawyer, after inquiring, and a retired police official discovered that Melicado and the two witnesses in Bulacan at the time Martinez was killed.

Those are quarrel with the lawyer Lim on whether Melicado is guilty or innocent.

Alibi a very weak defense

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

LIM, a lawyer, should know that an alibi is a very weak defense.

In law, an alibi is a plea that a person charged with an offense was in another place at the time the offense committed.

Considering that San Jose del Monte, Bulacan is near Manila, the suspect could have taken part in Martinez's assassination, and then could have proceeded to Bulacan after the crime.

The judge who will try the case will have that kind of mindset.

I am not saying Melicado is guilty.

I am only saying that Bulacan's proximity to Manila all the more makes Melicado's alibi a weak defense.

If the judge in the Vizconde multiple murder case did not buy the alibi of suspect Hubert Webb in the country's "crime of the century," much more so will the judge take Pelimaco's alibi.

Hubert, son of former Sen. Freddie Webb, was supposed to be in the Channel Nine when the Vizcondes were being butchered at 88 Hoseo, Pandacan.

Even DJ officials testified that the young Webb was in the DJ at the time of the grisly murders.

I brought up the case of Hubert Webb because Lim, who was director of the National Bureau of Investigation at the time of the Vizconde killings, said the boy was innocent.

By the way, why is it taking the Supreme Court so long to decide on the appeal of Webb et al?

* * *

A father's cry for justice for the death of his two sons two years ago has somehow been heard.

The Bureau of Fire Protection, after sitting on the case for two years, has taken cognizance of the Confessor's case against the owners of the Li Seng Giap Building in Binondo, Manila.

Confessor's two sons were killed when the building was razed.

The building was a fire trap according to Confessor.

He should know. Confessor had resided there with his two sons before tragedy struck.

BFP chief Tirso Cruz III has told Confessor the bureau's legal department is thinking of filing criminal charges against the building owners.

The owners only they know, Soriet's predecessor's virtually sat on Confessor's complaint.

Boric sotagrun sila.

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KOBE Bryant, now the undisputed leader of the new look Lakers, stuffs one down against the Denver Nuggets.

NBA OPENING

Post-Shaq LA Lakers, Pistons in hot starts

AUBURN HILLS, Michigan—Rasheed Wallace, one of five Pistons to score in double figures, had 24 points to help Detroit defeat the Houston Rockers 87-79 Tuesday night in the first game of the NBA season.

Tracy McGrady and Yao Ming, playing their first regular-season game together, found out what Rudy Tomjanovich and Rasheed Wallace did during their last four games together with the Los Angeles Lakers: The Pistons, notorious on defense and well-balanced on offense, are tough to beat.

"A lot of people are still doubting us, so I guess we just have to go out to it all again," Wallace said.

McGrady missed 12 of 16 shots and finished with 16 points after scoring just three during the first half. Yao had just seven points on 2-of-9 shooting.

"We aren't able to consistently attack on offense," Yao said.

Detroit's entire starting lineup from last season is back, and all five players scored at least 10. Aside from Rasheed Wallace's big night on 10-of-19 shooting, Chauncey Billups had 17, Richard Hamilton scored 15, Ben Wallace had 13 points and 16 rebounds and Tayshaun Prince scored 10 while smothering McGrady defensively much like he did against Bryant during the NBA Finals.

In Los Angeles, Bryant had 25 points, seven assists and three blocked shots, and Chris Mihm added a career-high 22 points and 11 rebounds as the Lakers never trailed in an 89-79 win over Denver.

The game was the Lakers' first in eight years without O'Neal on their roster and Rudy Tomjanovich's first as their coach. As recruited Phil Jackson, who coached the Lakers to three championships in five years.

Bryant shot just 5-of-14, but made 14 of 15 free shots. He scored 17 points after halftime.

Vladimir Radmanovic scored 21 points for the Nuggets before fouling his left Achilles' tendon with 6:42 left in the third quarter. He will undergo surgery and probably be sidelined for the season, a team spokesperson said.

Carmelo Anthony led Denver with 26 points. Jermaine Martin, playing his first game for the Nuggets, had 13 points, seven rebounds and five assists, and Marcus Camby had 14 rebounds and six blocked shots to go with eight points.

In Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki scored 29 of his 31 points over the first three quarters, helping the Mavericks to a (cold) lead, then came through by making nine free throws with 13.3 seconds left for a 108-98 victory over the Sacramento Kings.

Brad Miller led Sacramento with 29 points, and Chris Webber had 21 points and 10 rebounds.

AP

THE DETROIT Pistons raise the 2004 championship banner.

A different landscape for Tiger

ST. LUCIA—Tiger Woods does not play golf with a ring on his finger.

That was the answer to the first question about how things might be different in his first tournament as a married man.

But the biggest change was more subtle.

Woods began his pre-cut round at the Tour Championship on the 10th tee. He rapidly is the first one off on the first tee, a perk he has been afforded the last five years. But the first tee was occupied Tuesday by Vijay Singh, who is firmly entrenched at No. 1 in the world.

Then, Woods had to wait for Singh to finish his interviews before he could step to the tee.

And once Woods finished talking about his three-week honeymoon on a 90-footer (220-foot yacht in the Caribbean, he was bombarded with questions about Singh—just like so many other players who for years grew weary talking about Woods.

"He's played some just unbelievable golf this year," Woods said. "For somebody to smash as he does and still maintain that edge, and to touch on he practices, it's pretty impressive to do all that."

Woods will face eight majors. He is the only professional to hold all four major championship trophies at the same time. He has won more tournaments than anyone else still playing.

But the time is just one of the 30 players at the Tour Championship trying to seal his year on a good note. Children will use other lists for his autographs (which he autovoted East Lake. He still had more people in his gallery than any other players. If television ratings go up this week, Woods will be the reason.

AP

Sta. Lucia Tour resumes at Alta Vista

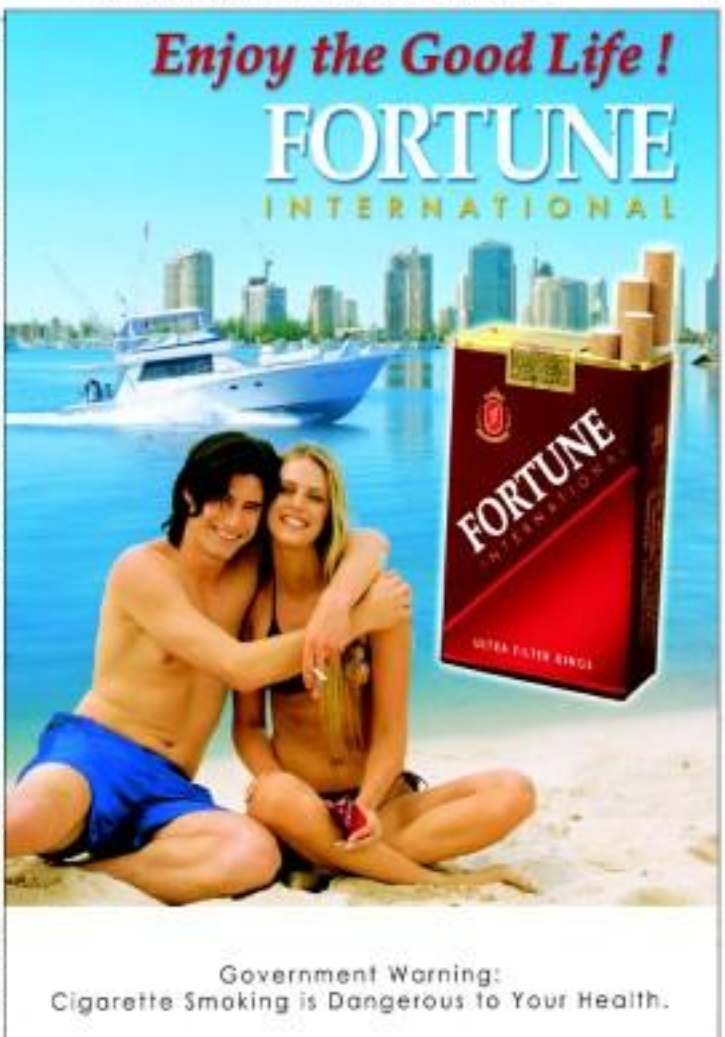
CEBU—Still smarting from several missed opportunities in the opening leg in Davao, Alta Vista of Cebu tries to take charge in its home course in a bid to bolster its lead for the overall place when the Sta. Lucia Golf Tour 2004 resumes here tomorrow.

The Alta Vistans are set to make up for a narrow defeat to arch-rival Eagle Ridge last month at the November phase of the Tour, featuring clubs competing for Bag of Wild Turkey brand Sta. Lucia, gets going with the first half of the 108-player field.

In recent years, the Cebuanos have used their hosting cues to amass crucial points, especially when they ended Eagle Ridge's reign as overall winner two years ago.

The current standings have Eagle Ridge showing the way with 28 points, just a shade ahead of Alta Vista, which has 27 in the runner-up slot in also-hosted by Sentosa, Clouge, 75 dots, Bunjoy, Cebu on hole in one sponsors and Cebu Pacific, Holcim, Bombyan, Mojio Kiko Dental, Marriot Cebu, The Bellevue Hotel (Manila), Philippine Airlines (Tours), Kodak Express, Pinebrook Country Bowl, Red Bull Barako and San Miguel Corp as sponsors.

A heated battle for the trophy is in the works as Mike Natalio kept itself within sight with 25 points and Deyade Tagaytay pan five behind at 23.



Sports TV

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SPORTS

Editor Teddyboy S. Melendres

Don't miss your favorite TV shows!
Check out today's Inquirer TV Guide in the Entertainment section

SHELLS: Ric Achievara battles the Talk 'N Text trio of Dondon Bolivar (left), Allan Salenga and Vince de Ocampo (right) in their game last night

A loss then a victory for TNT Phone Pals

By Jaime Pineda Jr.

A LOSS and a victory for Talk N Text on different courts yesterday.

The setback came in the form of a denial by the Quezon City Regional Trial Court of a temporary restraining order sought by PBA star Asi Taulava against an earlier Philippine Basketball Association decision to suspend him in a fake ID-for-spies feared on Department of Justice ruling.

Judge Rogelio Pizarro, presiding judge of QC RTC Branch 222, denied in a four-page order the issuance of a TRO for lack of merit, saying Taulava's action was premature and had no basis.

The Phone Pals found some consolation later in the day as the Accurry Coliseum in that got back on the winning track by thrashing the Shell Turbohawkeyes, 86-68, despite playing without Taulava for the fourth straight game.

Victor Pablo outscored the entire Shell squad, 12-7, in the second quarter and finished with a game-high 27 points as the Phone Pals regained sole leadership with a 6-1 record. The Turbohawkeyes dropped to 5-2.

In his decision, Pizarro said for now that MOP has not established any urgency for his petition. He also warned off Taulava's desire for forgiveness.

"The petitioner (Taulava) came to court with unclean hands and is therefore not entitled to injunctive relief. Pursuant to his Uniform Player's Contract, the petitioner is bound by the conditions of the PBA and should therefore respect and abide by the decisions of the PBA Board of Governors," Pizarro said in his order.

PBA commissioner Noli Eala has complained to the court that Taulava was given all the opportunity to present his side during the Senate investigation last year and before the Department of Justice.

Eala said he based the suspension on the BOI's findings, emphasizing that the foreign-born Taulava was included in the list of ten players who were found by the BOI based on an earlier investigation by the Senate, to have gained Filipino citizenship through fraudulent means.

Except for Taulava, Red Bull thriller's Dwayne Ross, Mick Pennisi, John Ordonez, Eddy Mirafuentes of Coca-Cola and Barangay Ginebra's Alex Compton were ordered suspended by the BOI.

Taulava's deportation case held in abeyance pending the lifting of a court injunction he had secured from the Manila Regional Trial Court last year.

"The PBA is very happy with the decision. It's an affirmation that the PBA is autonomous in terms of implementing league rules, player conduct and eligibility. It allows the PBA to deal in its own course without the intervention of a third party," said Eala.

Though an appeal is forthcoming, Eala strongly advised Taulava and his lawyers against it.

The Sarangani camp has failed to get the restricted "TNT" officials.

But asked about Taulava's case after TNT's win over Shell, coach Joel Banal said: "That's bad news for us."

The scores:

Talk 'N Text 86—Penisi 12, Ross 10, Alfaro 10, De Ocampo 10, Alapag 5, Asaj 4, Pan 2, Cadiente 2, Bolivar 2, Salenga 2, Ramos 0.

Shell 68—San Pedro 12, Yeo 9, Alvarez 8, Pascual 8, Arboleda 6, Aquino 4, Obligado 4, Ilagan 2, Dizon 0, Ilo Ramos 0.

Quarters: 23-12; 41-31; 56-48; 86-68.

HOT DASHBOARD
OVERSTRAINS YOUR ENGINE
DAMMIT!

Air Philippines eyes No. 3 vs ICTSI-La Salle

AIR PHILIPPINES Flight seeks to leadership today with coach Lawrence Chongson hoping their stuff hit so-so-to-hitting-terrors when the ex-pro ICTSI-La Salle in the PBL Open Championship at the Pasig Sports Center.

"It's very hard. We needed a lot of luck," said Chongson after the Flight emerged as the unlikely foes by winning two games with a total margin of only three points.

Jerome Pacena keyed both victories with his clutch shooting in the closing seconds.

After the Air Philippines-ICTSI tussle at 2 p.m., Shinsei Touch and Toyota Otis Isetan will try to improve their 1-1 records at 4 p.m.

Aside from Pacena, Pedo Hubalde and Mike Holper are the other Flight top guns posting double-digit averages of 12.5 points per game each. Holper is 6-foot-7 PK Ata, also holds a league-leading rebound four stands.

But Mac Cardona will try to make it a back-to-back win for the Archers after a sizzling 28-point performance against Arellet Molite-Shinsei, 83-82.

Toyota Otis Isetan, on the other hand, hopes to exact from its six-

STANDINGS	W	L
Air Philippines	2	0
Magnolia-PEU	2	0
Shinsei Touch	2	1
Shinsei	1	1
ICTSI-La Salle	1	1
Toyota Otis Isetan	1	1
Shinsei	1	2
Arellet Molite-Arellano	0	3

GAMES TODAY
(Pasig Sports Center)
2 p.m.—Air Philippines vs ICTSI-La Salle
4 p.m.—Shinsei vs Toyota Otis Isetan

harrowing 47-41 drubbing dealt by Magnolia-PEU.

On Saturday, the PBL will return to the scenic Ortigas to the first time in 15 years.

Defending champion Magnolia-HEU will collide with Toyota Isetan at 12 p.m., followed by the Shinsei-Shinsei and ICTSI-La Salle duel at 2 p.m. Admission is free.

"We can truly Ortigasnon treat to our loyal PBL fans," said PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad. "We want to give other basketball fans who could come to Pasig the chance to see for themselves the exciting action at the PBL."

Jaime Pineda Jr.

Orcollo pockets Cespa Open title

DESPITE of a title in his hometown, Dennis Orcollo pocketed one yesterday.

Orcollo downed compatriot Ronnie Gallego, 7-5, in the finals of the Grupo Nihali Open in Tokyo, Japan to snatch top prize supervised to about P350,000.

Orcollo, whose campaign is supported by Gobe Sports, headed by president Nelson Tiang, took the measure of Elvis Perez, 7-3, while Gallego downed Ramon Alcoro in all-Filipino semifinal showdown.

The 26-year-old pride of Bantayan del Sur was severely beaten by Taiwan's Lukas in the finals of the Member Philippine Nihali Open organized and sized in Japan.

Gallego earned in the event participated in by more than 100 from 10 cities.

Gallego bagged P75,000, while Perez and Alcoro settled for P25,000. The other Filipinos in the field, Antonio Gang, bowed out in the quarterfinals.

Marlon Ramos Jr.

Paragua, Gonzales dump separate foes

FILIPINO GM candidate Mark Paragua and International Master Ignacio Gonzales beat separate rivals to remain not top after the second round of the 1st Clem Cafiza Festival Open yesterday in Cadiz, Mallorca, Spain.

Playing white, Paragua defeated Polish Lech Hajac while Gonzales beat Spain's Modesto Diez Prida and joined Ukrainian Vladimir Belov, including second GM Sergei Volokitin, with 2 points.

National Master Emmanuel Hernador has 1.5 points after a draw with GM Emmanuel Edgar Bao.

The three members of the All Pawns Invitational Chess Olympiad are campaigning in Europe with the help of National Chess Federation of the Philippines president Joey Kiat, the First Gentleman Foundation, the Philippine Sports Commission, Debtas and Pinoy Marketing. Marlon Bernardino

Spill derails Aguilar's Asian title bid

MACAU, China—The Philippines' top motocross rider Clive Aguilar suffered a spill in the fourth lap of the second and final moto race and settled for second overall in the premiere Asian 125 cc class of the 2004 FIM Asian Motocross Series Finals here.

Although the Filipino defending champion still managed to finish third in the race, Japanese series leader Sakakura Hiroaki won the overall plum by just five points.

Aguilar's misfortune proved the support for the Philippine Motocross Federation event when Clive was supported by Camel, Air Manila, Polkgrott and the Philippine Sports Commission.

Kenneth Ian Andres also suffered a spill in the double jumps but still finished 14th in the 24-rider field.

Meanwhile, Clive, on the other hand, made it among the top 10 finishers in the 100 meters.

All three riders ran under the Cebu Revlon Unimix.

Team Riders/NL young rider Dapoy Enriquez took second place overall in the Japanese International Class after losing to Toru Ciapan of Guam in the finals. Carlos Bretel's Jetch Rifle shared the podium by grabbing third place overall.

The other SP powerup entries fared prominently with Patrick North Cebu starting fourth place, Celso's Kenpo Alquiros taking fifth and Ernesto Jacob in fourth finishing ninth.

Celso's Jaspin Adlawan topped three fifth place finishes and a sixth place box on against Asian Junior tournament host.

Bacolod needs P50M for SEAG

By Mari Anthony Reyes

BACOLOD City still need at least P50 million to host five of the 41 sports disciplines set up in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games, Bacolod Rep. Eleanor Panteverde announced yesterday.

Speaking after a meeting of local organizers there, Panteverde said the budget would be presented for approval by President Macapagal-Arroyo and the Philippine SEAG Organizing Committee before the Senate starts entertaining its allocations.

"Bacolod is ready, but just like the NCR (National Capital Region), we are still depending on (SEAG's budget approval)," said Panteverde.

She mentioned that Bacolod already has plans on where to get the budget, but the city still wants the blessing of the President for any fund-raising project.

The total budget for the SEAG has been pruned down to about P600 million with a lot of expenses going to the improvement of the Games' venues scattered all over Metro Manila, some parts of Southern Tagalog, Subic and Clark in Central Luzon and Cebu City.

Bacolod will host men's football along with weightlifting, boxing, beach volleyball and wushu.

Panteverde said there would be a big adjustment if the Malasa decides to have more than one football field for the men's competition.

The Bacolod Sports Complex, site of the Palaro-ng Pambansa and Batang Pinoy competitions, will be the site of men's football.

Boxing, where the country is hoping to duplicate or even better its gold medal haul in Vietnam last year, will be held at the University of St. La Salle, while weightlifting will be staged at the Bacolod Convention Center.

Beach volleyball will be held at the Bacolod reclamation area while Bacolod Sports Center will be the venue for the volleyball events.

Peter hammers out huge upset

Rallies to oust 2nd seed Aussie

THE JIL-FOREIGNERS are making a big show in the Hololan-ITS Philippine Women's Circuit Week 1 and it was JIL-German wildcard Anja Ventrese Peter's turn to shine yesterday as she Yaseen Sonio-Cabanal Sports Center in Pasig City.

Peter, a 6-5 shot-it hacker tempester by baseline habit, claimed the tournament's biggest upset so far when she rallied from a first set loss to eliminate second-seeded Cassandra Hart of Australia, 2-6, 7-5, 6-0, and advance to the quarterfinals.

"I think she suddenly lost the desire to fight," said Peter, a 1000-grader at Bicol Hubs, of a decisive swing where she won eight games in a row after Hart drew level at 5-5.

The Philippines' bid as the $12,000 tourney sponsored by Hololan and local affiliate Indian Cement Corporation remained floating but following the 6-4, 6-2 victory of Filipina Spanish Edilyn Balangay over Thai Wanitra Mahasaranon, a day after she claimed the world of 10th-seed Sandra Dorfmann in the first round.

The 16-year-old Peter, training under the care of former national champ Bonyong Sison, and Balangay will be facing Korean opponents as they pursue the crown's drive for a first title here since Rhonda Fernandez in 1999.

Peter is up against Hee-seo Lyoo-Suh who handled rival Brigid Richelieu of Australia, 6-1, 6-3, while Balangay, one of eight local qualifiers, takes on Hee-Youm Bae, 6-3, 7-5 winner over Rochinda Sarangsiriwat of Thailand.

The bad news, however, is that both Filipino entrants ran to collision course in the semifinals if they get past their Korean opponents today.

Unscheduled of the big set-ups made by the local stars, Balangay's win over Angel Rhondale secured her place in the semi round by beating out another Thai, Pontip Wishap, with a devastating 6-1, 6-1 win.

Meade, the highest world ranked player in the field at 67th, has so far given up only two games and settled one their No. 7 Lee Ye-Ra, who ended the run of lucky loser Maelle Lukes of the Philippines with a 6-2, 6-0 domination.

VOLLEYBELLES: A Rendez International School player vocalizes against Presida Learning Center in the Grassroots Girls Volleyball Invitational Tournament. Parada won, 25-12, 25-13. The tournament, featuring top high school teams is supported by Fruit-ades Cream Lollypop, Rural, Aquadlic Mineral Water and Milkasa.

Outdoor Quest: iRule completes runaway finish

SAMAL, Malaysia—Defending champion Joseph Riule slept better on the first day but Rule finished a strong second and clinched the overall title in the Outdoor Quest 2004 here.

Joseph took advantage of a navigating error by Rule in the final 7 kilometer kayak session and finished Tuesday's stage in the hours, six minutes and 34 seconds, failing Rule's bid for a sweep of the four stages and claiming third place overall.

Team Rule, which put a lock on the $40,000 top prize after rowing Stage 4 Monday, clocked 5:29:28 for a total time of 24:27:51, way ahead of second place Bike MO/Balance Bar, which placed seventh in the stage in 5:29:38 but a five-day total of 24:53:45.

"We really wanted to win it (Stage 5), but that was all we could do today," said Craig Stevens of Bike MO/Balance Bar.

Stevens, Dominic Manuel Higgins, Sebastian Eric Clemens and Pensilvanus Jalumbaud was second of $60,000 for Rule.

Tribe bagged $40,000 while Rugged parlayed $20,000. Seagate team leader Stephen Norman, knowing other squads never already learned into allow a grueling finish to take Rule's title, finished the penultimate stage in a respectable third place overall in 26:16:39.

National riders stay 5th overall

THE PHILIPPINES' national riders retained fifth overall Tuesday after the eighth fourth stage in the 2004 Tour de Taiwan 2004 here. Ian Moon Salvador reports.

Joel Calderon, Victor Espiritu and Ronald Constantino maintained the fourth among the top 20 in the tiger-race. The Filipinos' time that ended 3,2000 meters above sea level.

Calderon placed 11th in two hours, 58 minutes and four seconds, 36.52 behind Iranian stage winner Ghader Mizbani of the Giant Asia Racing Team (4:41.32).

Espiritu overall leader Mizbani of the powerhouse Manila squad of Europe took second (4:41.39) while Japanese Tetsuya Kano of the Shimano Racing Team placed 23rd (2:48.08).

Espiritu finished 17th in 3:01.50 while Constantino suffered a puffy last four hours, took 19th spot in 3:06.03.

The Filipinos kept their No. 5 position with an overall time of 32:30.54 behind Mizbani (31:39.42). Giant Asia Racing Team of Taiwan (32:40.56), the fifth team of Iran (33:04.46) and the Iranian Racing team of Japan (33:48.40).

SPORTSWATCH

NBA on RPN starts today

SPORTS fans can now watch the NBA games on RPN 9 three times a week starting today. Two outings, produced by the NBA's exclusive broadcast partners, Solar Entertainment, will feature NBA games at 7:30 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays, and two at 10 a.m. on Saturdays. NBA on RPN-9 kicks off today with the Houston Rockets hosting the Toronto Raptors at 7:30 p.m. On Sunday, the Denver Nuggets battle the Utah Jazz live at 10 a.m. Solar said the next telecast (7 NBA games a week. The NBA games can be seen daily on Solar Sports (Channel 39 on cable), including two live games on Tuesdays, as well as one live NBA game on Sports Plus (Channel 61 on cable).

Manny Pacquiao's Thai foe hits town

HARIMAU Gym fighters, Manny Pacquiao's opponents in Dec. 11 fight, will be flown in today for a press conference tomorrow at The Hotel at Tagaytay. The conference will also serve as a launch of the Pacquiao fight. Pacquiao, on the other hand, will also attend a meeting with General Santos for the press conference.

Camp & Play League clinic up in GenSan

THE CAMP & Play League in General Santos City will organize a three-day Basketball Clinic to be conducted by Philippine Basketball Association assistant coaches of the Rosal Christian School today. Led by camp director and Shell assistant coach Danny Almadoro, the youngsters will undergo drills after which participants on any Coca-Cola assistant coaches Noah Razon and Joey Castro. Goaltending, strength and conditioning coach Ben Mamaligay and Powerade assistant coach Gio Gonzalez. The camp is supported by Gilet, adidas, Gatorade, Red Horse Productions, 3D Print Shop, the Office of the Mayor of General Santos, Sun Star Davao and Sun Star Cebu. For inquiries, call or text 0919 3188611.

More big races set at PRC

QUEZON, major events have been lined up by the Philippine Racing Club starting with the Philippine Racing Commission Cup on Nov. 14. The other big races include the 5th Star Mayor Philippine Sportsmen Association of Race Horse Owners (Philrho) Breeders' Cup on Nov. 28-30, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office President's Gold Cup on Dec. 12 and the Philippine Racing Commission Classic Sprint on Dec. 26. Ron Sta. Lucia Realty and Development Inc., along with Royale Homes Marketing Inc., recently held the Sta. Lucia Racing Festival last Oct. 31 at the Sta. Ana Park.

All set for 'Bakbakan' qualifiers

THE QUALIFYING rounds of Bonifacio Mega Cockpit Arena's all-Filipino cockfighting derby, the Bakbakan Invitational Derby, will be held on Nov. 6, 7 and 13 to 14 at the Bonifacio Global City. The derby will feature 32 cocks that will battle it out in the single-elimination format. The qualifying rounds will be held at the Bonifacio Global City. The derby will feature 32 cocks that will battle it out in the single-elimination format. The qualifying rounds will be held at the Bonifacio Global City.

OFFICIALS of the Manila Lady Golfers Foundation Inc., headed by chairlady Betsy Tuason (left), pose with kids and volunteers of Kipita Foundation, whose mission is to provide support to pediatric cancer patients. They will be the main beneficiaries of the Manila Ladies Cup, a first-in-one golf tournament being off Nov. 16 at Wack Wack's west course.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2004 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER B1

BUSINESS

John Raoul D. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Carrie S. Martinez

Ultron
The Ultimate Reliable
from Fujitsu Siemens.
From Petron.

Garments, electronics seen reeling in '05

By Michelle V. Barra

THE PHILIPPINES is likely to experience a slowdown in export growth to as low as 2.5 percent next year, as the garments industry reels from the phaseout of the quota system and the electronics sector faces a decline in global demand.

This was the forecast made by the Institute of International Finance Inc. (IIF), a global association of financial institutions, in its latest report on the Philippine economy.

The 2.5 percent export growth projected for 2005 was much smaller than the 13 percent expansion expected by the country. IIF's export sector this year. IIF said developments in the garments and electronics sectors, the Philippines' two biggest export earners, would significantly pull down the country's revenues from merchandise exports.

The forecast of a slowdown was despite the relatively strong export performance in the past months. The country's merchandise exports grew by 13.7 percent in August to $3.41 billion compared with the same month last year. The August export figure brought the country's year-to-date export revenues to $20.20 billion, 8.40 percent higher than last year's.

"After rebounding to 4 percent this year from less than 2 percent in 2003, export growth is likely to slip to 2.5 percent in 2005. (It may turn out to moderate from the normal that began in the second half of 2003)," IIF said in the paper, which summarizes the group's outlook for the Philippine fiscal year and its evaluation of the country's economic performance in the past months of this year.

IIF said demand for information technology-related products was expected to start falling next year after its rise this year. It added that garments exports from the Philippines would likely suffer a depression as competition becomes tight with the lifting of the quota system.

According to the World Trade Organization's 2005 Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC), quotas for garments exports will have to removed by January 2005 to complement its liberalization policy.

The Philippines benefited from the quota system because it enjoyed unrivaled allocation for its garments exports to major export destinations like the United States and European countries.

With the lifting of the quota system, the Philippines and other garments exporters are expected to face stiff competition from China.

With the expected adverse effects of the lifting of the quota system, the Confederation of Garments Exporters of the Philippines (Cotexpo) signed with 36 other garments exporting countries a petition seeking a three-year deferment of the removal of the export quota system for garments and textile.

Spare diesel, hike gasoline prices, oil firms urged

By Abigail L. Ho

IN CONSIDERATION of the upcoming ease of the public transport sector, the Department of Energy is urging local oil firms not to raise diesel prices, but to jack up gasoline pump prices instead if they want to recover losses coming from the socially sensitive fuel.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said oil companies should consider subsidizing diesel consumers, particularly the public transport sector, by implementing additions in gasoline price increases, even as the price of diesel in the world market continued to escalate.

Local oil firms, he explained, could still spare some margins from their gasoline products. These were concessions, or price decreases in the international market not reflected in local pump prices, could be used to offset increases incurred from diesel.

"We're sensitive to the claims of the transport groups," he said in a briefing yesterday. "There's an zero recovery in gasoline, so there's some pressure for oil firms to cross-subsidize."

He said he had already brought this appeal to the attention of two of the country's major oil firms. However, there was no indication as to whether or not they would heed this appeal.

World oil prices have softened a bit in the first two days of November on hopes of a John Kerry victory in the race for the US presidency.

The November contract was pegged at $55.30 a barrel for the benchmark Dubai crude, down 21 US cents from the October average of $55.34 a barrel.

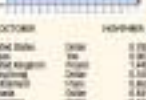
The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products likewise went down in the first two days of November to $52.91 a barrel from a high $54.75 a barrel last month.

MOPS-based diesel also dropped to $56.70 a barrel in the first 1-2 period from the October average of $58.46a barrel.

However, world oil prices remained very volatile as the world awaited the results of the US presidential election.

Currencies

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



OCTOBER NOVEMBER

United States	Dollar	0.0177	1.00000
Japan	Yen	0.1810	10.2270
United Kingdom	Pound	1.4451	81.6500
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.1828	1.0325
Switzerland	Franc	0.8249	46.6010
Canada	Dollar	0.8218	46.4260
Singapore	Dollar	0.4739	26.7750
Australia	Dollar	0.8952	50.5810
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.2326	13.1410
Thailand	Baht	0.0423	2.3900
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	0.2663	15.0470
Brunei	Dollar	0.6059	34.2270
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.0009	0.0507
Thailand	Baht	0.0434	2.4510
UAE	Dirham	0.2698	15.2430
Korea	Won	0.0000	0.0020
Kuwait	Dinar	0.2599	14.6840
Bahrain	Dinar	0.2619	14.7970
Qatar	Riyal	0.2674	15.1070
Oman	Rial	0.2599	14.6840
Taiwan	Dollar	0.5574	31.4930
Vietnam	Dong	0.0000	0.0028
Egypt	Pound	0.0000	0.0000
Bahrain	Dinar	0.2619	14.7970
Qatar	Riyal	0.2674	15.1070
Oman	Rial	0.2599	14.6840
Taiwan	Dollar	0.5574	31.4930
Vietnam	Dong	0.0000	0.0028
Egypt	Pound	0.0000	0.0000

Stock Market

Stocks end higher

Get more market news on Page B6

CAP hopeful on wiping out deficit

Banks	
Commercial	
Universal	
Rural	
Cebuana	0.10
Philippine	0.15
Columbian	0.1563
1 Year	0.0951
2 Years	10.805
3 Years	11.6808
4 Years	12.0172
5 Years	11.5149
7 Years	11.1833
10 Years	13.9886
15 Years	13.96
20 Years	14.250

Banks	
Commercial	
Universal	
Rural	
Cebuana	0.1429
Philippine	0.1364
Columbian	0.2083
1 Year	0.0951
2 Years	10.8125
3 Years	11.6808
4 Years	12.0172
5 Years	11.596
7 Years	11.1538
10 Years	13.7143
15 Years	13.8654
20 Years	13.9
25 Years	14.000

SSS,GSIS,AFP-RSBS

DOF to push for key reforms in pension funds

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT'S economic team is preparing a suite of reforms to add some financial muscle into the country's pension funds.

Pension funds, such as the Social Security System and the Government Service Insurance System, have been criticized for questionable investment decisions and fund deficiencies.

"We want to have a sustainable pension reform system, such that when one retires, there are always available funds to support benefit claims," said a ranking government official from the Department of Finance (DOF), a member of the economic team.

The government source declined to give specific details of the reform package, but said it would include programs to extend the actuarial life of the SSS, whose funds were expected to be depleted by 2014 if no repairs for a hike in members' contributions would not be granted.

The SSS services private sector employees.

The reform agenda would also include programs to revive the Retirement and Separation Benefits System (RSBS) of the Armed Forces of the Philippines back to financial health.

The national government had been shouldering pension benefits of retired military personnel because RSBS did not have enough funds.

The inability of the RSBS to shoulder benefit claims of its members was partly blamed on the 1997 Asian financial crisis that ostensibly hit the real estate sector, in which the pension fund made substantial investments.

Massive corruption in the RSBS was rumored to have also allegedly eroded its fund base.

"The program would also focus on coming up with ideal investments (for the pension funds)," the source said.

Making wise investment decisions has been a primary goal for the pension funds considering their fund problems, the source said.

So far (are), the GSIS, although its actuarial life is relatively healthy at over 30 years, faces criticisms from some of its members over its investments in non-traditional instruments, such as works of art.

GSIS is the pension fund servicing government employees.

"What is really ideal is to make the actuarial life of pension funds last a lifetime," the source said, adding the pension fund reform the government was hoping to fulfill would be to make the country's social security system as par with international models, such as that of the United States.

Globe, 6 other telcos form regional alliance

By Clarissa S. Batino

GLOBE Telecom Inc. yesterday signed an agreement with six others in Asian mobile operations to form a regional alliance that would serve their combined 56 million customers through a shared infrastructure.

The other members of the alliance are Singapore Telecom, Bharti of India, Maxis of Malaysia, Optus of Australia, Advanta Cellular Corp. and Telkom. sel of Indonesia.

These firms formed Bridge Mobile Pte Ltd, which was incorporated in Singapore.

The member-companies will invest $12 million in Bridge Mobile, aim to become one of the largest alliances in the region.

Participating companies will subscribe to equal number of shares in the company and will each have a permanent seat in the board.

Bridge Mobile has a combined base of more than 56 million, of which 33.7 million belong to the joint venture of Ayala Corp. and Singtel in the Philippines. The consortium base is expected to grow to 200 million in the medium term.

The first venture is expected to start operations in the first quarter of 2005.

Bridge Mobile will establish a regional mobile infrastructure and common service platform, which will pave the way for the seamless delivery of mobile services in the region.

Bridge Mobile, in a statement, said it would also develop new products and services on a regional basis.

"Increasingly, the business of Globe is taking on a dimension beyond the Philippines. Bridge Mobile can play a critical role in maximizing the opportunities available to Globe, while providing its other members access to Globe-developed services that may be relevant to their markets," said Globe president Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II in a statement.

Ahlers said the joint venture would enable Globe to share its innovations with other mobility players.

"At the same time, it would allow the company to aggressively look into the potential of the Filipinos working overseas," he added.

"There are a number of interesting innovations and applications coming out from the Philippines that are relevant to the markets of our Bridge Mobile. There includes Globe's AutoloadMax, (Buhay-load) and the most recent breakthrough "G-Cash" innovation for micro-payments), peer-to-peer cash transfers and domestic and international remittances," Ahlers said.

Lim Chuan Poh, chair of Bridge Mobile and CEO of SingTel, noted that the alliance would allow the regional mobile players to work closely to overcome challenges unique to them. By sharing the risks and benefits, Bridge Mobile would bring a better mobile experience for users in the region, he added.

"The region is made up of highly diversified cultures, economies, mobile market maturity and varying degrees of technological development. As a result, mobile operators in this region are unable to fully capitalize on economies of scale," noted Lim.

Other mobile operators in the Asia-Pacific region and strategic partners...such as technology and application solution providers...will be offered membership in the Bridge Mobile alliance.

Bridge Mobile will launch a menu of services to include roaming voice and data roaming services, a single source of supply of mobile services in the Asia-Pacific for multi-national and large corporate customers, and other joint product development initiatives.

"Our size will allow us to command significant commercial benefits and economies of scale to the alliance members," said Lim.

"We are pleased that Bridge Mobile has chosen to establish its global headquarters and R&D center in Singapore. Bridge Mobile will be a magnet to attract leading handset, network equipment providers, technology and content players to establish high value-added mobile activities in Singapore. This will give a significant boost to Singapore's standing as a leading wireless and mobility hub in Asia Pacific," said Teo Ming Kian, chair of the Singapore Economic Development Board.

China Bank profit up 73.5%

CHINA Banking Corp. reported a 73.5-percent hike in its net profit in the third quarter to P750 million from a year ago, on strong net interest and fee-based revenues.

The third quarter performance brought the bank's nine-month net income to P2.14 billion and its return on equity to 15.16 percent, a fill one of the few Philippine banks recording double-digit returns on equity.

Union Bank of the Philippines, for its part, reported a net profit of P1.61 billion in the first nine months, after seeing aside P358 million in extra loan-loss provisions that yielded a return on average equity of 15.79 percent.

For the third quarter alone, China Bank said its interest income rose by 33.8 percent to P1.29 billion, from P967 million in the same period last year. Fee-based revenues, in addition, reached P719 million. Boris C. Bayuha

P1-B EXPANSION
President Macapagal-Arroyo and Speaker Jose de Venecia recently visited the facilities of United Pulp and Paper Co. Inc. in Calumpit, Bulacan, a subsidiary of Stora Pulp and Paper Public Co. Ltd. of Thailand. The firm embarks on a P-1 billion upgrading of its 34-MW power plants, which supplies the power requirements of the paper mill. With the President are (from left) UPPC EVP Luis Fortajin, Calumpit Mayor Jaime de Jesus, Bulacan Rep. Willy Alvarado, UPPC VP Miguel del Rosario, UPPC president and CEO Fukunaganq Clockwise and Bulacan Gov. Josie de la Cruz.

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2 months	2.625%	2.750%	2.875%	3.000%	3.125%
3 months	2.750%	2.875%	3.000%	3.125%	3.250%
6 months	2.875%	3.000%	3.125%	3.250%	3.375%
12 months	3.000%	3.125%	3.250%	3.375%	3.500%

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First Savings Bank liquidation sought

By Doris C. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE Deposit Insurance Corp. has filed a court petition seeking the liquidation of First Savings Bank, saying the thrift bank was no longer suitable for rehabilitation.

PDIC is mandated to determine whether a bank placed under receivership is still viable for rehabilitation within 90 days after taking over the bank.

The petition was filed with the Makati Regional Trial Court, last Friday, PDIC deputy liquidator Bernadette Sanchez said.

In a separate interview, PDIC president Ricardo Tan explained that the prospect for the thrift bank's rehabilitation was dim because the recording shareholders, Jesus Tajanlo, had died without a will last year.

"Even if we offer the bank to new investors, it is not known who will transfer the shares...Even make things easier, we opted for liquidation," Tan said.

"After this, we will ask for proposals from interested parties to either re-franchise the bank or purchase the assets and assume its liabilities," Tan said.

The bank was placed under PDIC receivership after it registered following a takeover by the closing bank of its account. About 96 checks issued by FSB to retail clients, mostly market vendors, bounced last same day and triggered panic among its depositors.

Clearinghouse now 100% PSE-owned

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange (PSE) said it had fully acquired its subsidiary, the Securities Clearing Corporation of the Philippines (SCCP).

The PSE bought the 5-percent equity holdings of Citicorp Investments (CI) International in SCCP making the clearinghouse 100 percent owned by the bourse.

PSE president Francis Lim said the full ownership of the SCCP would provide additional sources of revenue for the exchange, enhance operational efficiency and strengthen the integrity of the stock markets.

Last September, the PSE acquired the stakes of Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. (RCBC) and Investment PCI Bank (IPCI) to SCCP, each bank owned 22 percent of the clearinghouse.

Lim said Singapore Stock Exchange had been getting 65 percent of its operating revenue from its clearinghouse. Bilateral d Sanchez

20 firms vie for Napocor assets valuation deal

TWENTY local and foreign firms have expressed interest in conducting an independent financial valuation of the National Power Corp.'s big generation assets.

However, the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) said it would allow only five firms to submit technical and financial proposals for the contract.

Representatives of the 20 firms attended yesterday's pre-proposal meeting where PSALM officials held a briefing on its requirements.

PSALM pre-qualification bids and awards committee chair Rafael Siclunan Jr. told the bourse that the 20 would be screened to five.

He said the five qualified companies would be notified by the end of the month.

"They would then be given 20 days to submit their technical and financial proposals to PSALM," he said.

By January, he said, PSALM would have already awarded the contract to the winning bidder.

The chosen firm would be tasked to come up with an "impartial and independent" financial valuation that would be the basis for determining the value of 17 Napocor generation assets, which are producing more than 1,100 megawatts of electricity.

Among the interested firms are entities of Richard Ellis Philippines Inc., PNC Bank (Ong Lacson Hontanglaya and Co., and Orien-

Something fussy

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Bautista III

IF YOU can, avoid being born a long time ago, when the core administration of Gloriastra is in the throes of playing around with business rules.

A certain company selling pre-need educational plans, the succulent GAF, kept to its just time. This foolish GAF remained loyal to born 24 years ago.

If only GAF avoided its birth at that time, it would not be hurting profusion with its regulator today... the government.

The government agency Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the private business GAF are in an argument over how need-sold SEC rules.

Starting the past four years, these same SEC rules have already been proven wrong. Appallingly, horribly awfully wrong!

Again, these were four years already. Something must be so fears about the wrong rules, the SEC could not do something about them.

* * *

FOUR years ago, somebody in the SEC probably woke up one day with a bright idea: Let's just impose new rules on GAF.

But then, the bright idea could have also been inspired by some other motives, such as life insurance, which could be from the industry.

Naturally, the SEC ruled that GAF should set aside a lot more funds TODAY for the mirror loss of its plan holders that will happen even up to 30 years in the future.

Based on the SEC's computation, the so-called "reclusive" is 26. The SEC itself avoids the term "deficiency"; in the GAF it was funds should be 19.7 billion.

In other words, GAF must raise that amount to avoid or hard assets to follow the SEC rule, and if it cannot, it can no longer sell education plans. Death for GAF to close?

* * *

THAT figure of P19 billion was the so-called PROJECTION of the SEC, called by so-called EXPERTS hired by the SEC itself, mostly from a principal of light.

Unfortunately, the GAF the projection (i.e. guess) was off as far this year by almost 10 percent from the actual real life payments which GAF makes to plan holders.

For 2002, the SEC rules predicted that GAF would have an SRA (or actuarial reserve liability) of more than P5 billion.

In real life, GAF paid out to its plan holders less than P2 billion, meaning that the SEC prediction was off by 10 percent.

Long Distance Telephone Co. and Smart Communications Inc.

PLDT and Smart chair Manuel Pangilinan was also elected chairman.

"The successful completion of the debt exchange transaction as well as the matching completion of the equity tender will enable us to significantly rationalize Digi's position. Our goal now is to sustain Digi's profitability over the long term and realize positive contributions to the PLDT group," Manzano said in a statement.

Pangilinan said Piltel must register between P1.1 billion and P1.2 billion in net income this year after narrowing billions of loss

Something fussy

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Bautista III

For 2003, the SEC rules predicted an SRA of P1.7 billion, but the actual payments of GAF reached only P1.2 billion. This time, the SRA was off by only 41 percent.

According to the rules, the ARL should be P2.4 billion in two years to July this year. Actual payments for the period amounted to P1.2 billion. Again, off by 46 percent!

No wonder GAF is asking the SEC to change the rules, simply because they were wrong. Dead wrong, in fact!

If the SEC-predicted was off by only say, 10 percent, it could have been due to some quirks in the GAF business.

But the SEC figures were off at times by almost 50 percent. If a medical doctor makes the same mistake, the patient will have been dead right away.

* * *

AND is under the control of the SEC for its so-called P17 billion, or, "variance" for sometime now. GAF argues that it's probably time or to reinvest by today.

At least the investors should consider what actually happened in real life—are just projection by experts who reportedly were providing some US business interests.

First, the SEC supposedly told GAF to do anything about the rules, the SEC must wait for GAF's next move.

And why is that? Because, according to the SEC, that is what the rules said! The rules said that the rules can be changed in April next years—whether managers generally wrong.

NOW those SEC rules were made during the time of SEC Chair Lilia Bautista, who got the bright idea from somebody in the Department of Trade and Industry.

Just exactly what the DTI had to do with pre-need educational plans is anybody's guess.

Anyway, in charge now is SEC Chair Fe Barin, a staunch career lawyer from the central bank, who served as its corporate secretary for a long time until her retirement.

In recent meetings between GAF and the SEC, Barin reportedly told her people to correct the way all the math figures in the ARL for GAF.

From what I heard, the SEC people below Barin said that wonderful "variance in anything until April" argument. Let's see who prevails.

* * *

IN BUSINESS, word has been going around about the financial troubles of GAF latterly because of the SEC's wee-off prediction of a P17 billion "variance"—whatever being done under the catch-the-"variance" trap be.

And most people blame the insistence to latterly of GAF with a real estate company called PDI future.

The founder of GAF happens to be the father of the chair of PAL future.

Since real estate is down for the past seven years or so, GAF must be hurting out P8 billion. "Boy GAF to now forced to raise billions upon billions because of SEC future.

Based on official records, nothing can be far from the truth. True, GAF invested heavily in PDI stock, but GAF made its investments during P.E. future's heydays.

GAF made a fortune—so, actually a "killing"—because of its investments in PDI future projects. Even the SEC people who were assigned to watch over GAF admitted as much.

GAF made a lot of money out of PDI future, as GAF now holds bonds and real estate that amount to several times over its initial investments.

That is what the records show. It is not just "rhetoric." Also not a projection, okay?

* * *

IN THE PAST 15 or so years before the SEC came up with its bright idea, the pre-need enterprises were growing by 15 to 20 percent a year.

Life insurance, on the other hand, was shrinking at the same rate.

After the SEC changed the rules on companies selling college education plans, the trend reversed. The pre-need sector dropped at existing by the same 15 to 20 percent a year.

Now, here is a little "rhetoric." It seems that a big insurance company from the United States wants to "bail out" GAF simply by taking over the company.

And you know what... brokers never seen in GAF even before the SEC could even make the first step to change its rules on pre-need.

Of course, that made the GAF people suspicious. They probably smelled something fishy.

NAZARENO NAMED PRESIDENT

Piltel nets ₱743M in 3rd quarter

By Clarissa S. Bautista

PILTEL: Telephone Corp., yesterday said it made P743 million in profits in the first nine months, reversing a net loss of P1.6 billion a year ago even after making the net semester results due to changes in accounting policies.

Piltel said it realized its first half net income to P513 million from the P430 million it had originally reported. The company's board of directors also named Napoleon Nazareno as its president and chief executive officer after accepting the resignation of Gregorio Araneta.

Nazareno is vice president of Philippine

Belle posts 61% drop in 9-month profit to ₱84.8M

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PROPERTY developer Belle Corp. said its net earnings from January to September declined 61 percent to P84.8 million from P219.8 million during the same period last year on higher expenses despite an increase in gross profits.

The company said the higher net income in 2003 was due to gains from debt settlements that amounted to P446.4 million. Without the

debt settlement, last year's nine-month financial report would have recorded a net loss of P338.5 million.

Belle said net revenues from sales of real estate and dividends for the nine-month period increased by 51 percent to P427.6 million from P228.7 million.

Gross profit likewise soared 99 percent to P280.6 million from P143.9 million.

The bulk of the sales revenues came from Phase 1 of its Sans Isle subdivision project, Plantation Hills, in Batangas, that was launched last year. Roughly 80 percent of the project has been developed.

Belle operating expenses climbed 33 percent to P70.3 million from P52.9 million due to the development activities in Plantation Hills, preparations for three additional projects in the present and preparations for Sonoma Hills, a new house and lot subdivision project located close to Plantation Hills. Sonoma is planned for launch later this year.

DISCLOSURES

KYLA Corp. will hold an analysts' briefing at 3 p.m. on Nov. 9 in the South Tower B of the SSP Tower Bldg. Ayala Ave., Makati City to discuss the company's unaudited financial and operating results for the first three quarters of 2004.

* * *

SMC Holdings Inc. disclosed that 20,000 preferred shares redeemed for October shall be debited, effective Nov. 3, bringing its outstanding preferred shares to 597,340.

* * *

CENTRAL San Miguel Inc. and **San Miguel Corp.** will hold a briefing on the corporations' 9M04 (September year-to-date financial results on Nov. 8 at 2 p.m. in the Executive Meeting Room of the 2nd Floor of the San Miguel Head Office Complex, No. 40 San Miguel Ave., Mandaluyong City.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Realty and Holdings Corp. confirmed it was in talks with investors for the joint development of two Davidson lots.

* * *

SMC-Miguel Corp. wasn't was not looking to acquire any stake in Meralco, its Lucio Tan, Chronicled by B.J. Yap, PDI Research

20 firms vie . . .

(Continued on page B2)

Eleanor Gonzales/Philippine Financial Advisers Inc.

Also eyeing the contract are Isaac Appraisal Co. Inc., Benguet Philippines Inc., Chubu Holdings Corp., Cuervo Appraisers Inc., Value Philippines Inc., Ingenia Ltd., Isaacson, Sullivan Professional Valuation and Consultants, Silverio Bautista Inc., Alison Gaerlan/Feliciano Manalo Joint Consultant Inc., Sinclair Knight Merz, Royal Asia Appraisal Corp., TUV Philippines Inc., Unicapital Inc., ORO Management Engineering Environment and Persons Synterhoff Group Philippines Inc. Abigail L. Ho

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PARTY of the best cooks in town /C2

LIFESTYLE

Editor Cheiko Bautista-Fermoso

MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS • TUESDAY FITNESS • WEDNESDAY 28

Chefs of the world, unite!

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aquino

In March this year, chefs from all over the world gathered together in Dublin, Ireland, and declared Oct. 20 as International Chefs Day.

The event's objective was "to create widespread awareness of the profession while providing a vehicle for chefs to do their bit for charity through non-profit food and beverage events."

As our colleagues celebrated this event in their respective countries, set in the Philippines had our own party at Dos, where Le Regent Hotel launched a food-raising campaign for the club's outreach program to help young underprivileged Filipinos aspiring to become chefs to fulfill their dreams.

Chef Fernando's menu was as eclectic as the crowd present—a reaffirmation that despite our differences in nationalities and cultures, optimists and hellcats, even in cooking styles and standards, we are bound together.

As a simple gesture of thanks from people in the food industry like me to you, for all the support you have given us, I've decided to share a piece of that celebration with you. And asked Señor Arracama for his Ironlala Uva recipe of field greens in honey balsamic dressing, glazing pearl, toasted walnuts and grapes, a delicious yet easy salad to prepare.

Honey Balsamic salad dressing
2 medium shallots, minced
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1/3 c balsamic vinegar
Salt and freshly ground pepper
1/2 c extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 c corn oil
2 tbsp coarse-ground sugar

• Combine ingredients except oil and process until blended.
• Add oil in a thin stream and blend until emulsified.
• Season to taste.

mixed greens, washed and spun dried
seedless grapes, halved
sliced lemong peel, sliced
walnuts, toasted and chopped
• Put salad greens in a bowl.
• Drizzle with vinaigrette, toss well.
• Garnish with grapes, lemong peel and walnuts.

Where do I get good cheap steak? Any Christmas gift ideas?

Two of this corner's most frequently asked questions that I now have brilliant answers for! Recently I met JR and Vina Camacho, owners of Prime Beef, a company that imports Australian cattle but ages and fattens them in the Philippines. They are awake for me to try, and I was impressed! They tasted Australian but at very reasonable prices, and are great for those in search of decent Angus alternatives. The company builds-to-your-specs and hardly ever varies its menu, so each batch you get is guaranteed fresh.

My steaks came in a silky crate, wrapped in insulated bags. They'll make wonderful Christmas presents. Crates come in small (for a bbq), medium and large sizes. To the Camachos, congratulations! The quality and other goodies put into the work that you do is commendable. Call 9268867, 9268864.

Classic pasta sauce

Here is part 1 of the classic pasta sauce series, as promised.

Bolognese is a classic meat sauce, a "ragu" in Italy, the most famous one comes from Bologna, in the region of Emilia Romagna. A ragu is a rich meat sauce with tomato and not vice versa.

The Italians have the Accademia Italiana della Cucina, a gastronomic society that documents and "standardizes" recipes to protect and ensure the authenticity of the country's famed dishes.

My recipe falls within their standards, though the ingredients and their quantities may vary from one cook to the next, and the variations in this recipe are one many. By the way, expect this to be a light-coloured sauce and not blood red, as we so often see.

Science for success: Caramelize brown meats and vegetables before adding any other ingredient, then add liquid ingredients and cover, simmering sauce gently over very low heat to allow the flavors to develop. Serve with your favorite pasta—spaghetti, tagliatelle, rigatoni, penne etc.,, cooked "al dente." Remember, pasta should be lightly coated in sauce and never floating in it!

Bolognese
1/3 c extra-virgin olive oil
2 tbsp butter
1 c carrots, fine dice
1 c onion, sliced
1 c celery, fine dice
1 tbsp sliced garlic
1/2 lb ground veal—if you don't like veal, use lean ground beef
1/2 lb ground pork
1 c pancetta—Santis Deli or bacon, ground
2 tbsp tomato paste diluted in 8 c beef stock
1 c white wine
1 c heavy cream (Elle & Vire, Bulla or Frisian Flag) or milk
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Parmigiano Reggiano Cheese freshly grated (Santis Market)

• In a saucepan, heat olive oil and butter.
• Add carrots, onions, celery and garlic. Cook 'til soft, 15 minutes.
• Add meats, cook until brown, stirring constantly.
• Add stock and wine, simmer an hour.
• Add cream and simmer 30 minutes or until sauce is soft.
• Season to taste with salt and pepper.
• Toss over pasta and finish with grated Parmigiano.

For questions and comments, text 0917-8309008.

CHEFS WHO DINE: (from left) Othmar Frei, president of Les Toques Blanches Philippines and general manager of Wyndemburg Corp.; Humphrey Navarro and Norbert Gamiller of International School for Culinary Arts and Hotel Management; Ian McKenzie of Philippine Airlines, and Willy Rieser of Macronesia Exotar

When chefs celebrate

By Virgie Baga-Reyes

JUST for a day recently, the country's top professional chefs gathered together, took off their toques, donned and greased it just for all the new hires.

The date was Oct. 20 and the occasion was the first World Chefs Day, observed worldwide by the World Association of Cooks Societies (WACS).

"Our friends from WACS declared Oct. 20 of every year to be World Chefs Day to honor and recognize all the chefs and even restaurant owners around the globe," said Othmar Frei, president of Les Toques Blanches (LTB) Philippines and general manager of Nestlé-Ivory Corporation.

How why not? If there's Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day, Grandparents' Day, Secretaries' Day, among others, so why not a World Chefs' Day?

LTB-Phils., an organization of professional chefs and restaurant owners in the country founded 20 years ago, has more than 60 members. It is dedicated to the development of the food and beverage industry, honing of young and upcoming cooks, and sometimes to culinary art noteworthy.

Highlights of the Hero Chefs Day celebration were a special cocktail and dinner prepared by Fernando Amezaga at his famous Oya Restaurante in Greenbelt 2. Spain Centro Gastronómico Oyá at Enzo was consisted of grilled tuna salsa with orange mint dressing, roast duck and mushroom risotto with sweet chili cream, cooked crab with tartar tail dip, what Amezaga called sudden "surprise" with mango salsa, and the dessert, you'll watch crushed and chopped vegetable salad. Accompanying the pan-pinas were wines from Tyrrell's Winery Australia.

Compliments to the chef

The sit-down dinner was held at Oya's upper floor. Amezaga was complimented for the delicious and the skilly arranged dishes.

For starters, he served Insalata Oya, mixed field greens tossed in honey balsamic dressing topped with sweet morning pear, toasted pine nut grapes. Next came the melt-in-your-mouth Pan seared Foie Gras on buttered lobster in a fragrant shiitake mushroom broth and pickled pink ginger. It was followed by Lemongrass roasted Lapu-Lapu fillet on sautéed lemon grass with shrimp and chive beurre blanc and candied tomatoes.

The fish was sautéed dream with Tyrrell's

CELEBRATING World Chefs Day, Oya's Fernando Amezaga, Brothers Burger's Quirolgico, InQuiK's food columnist Reggie Aquino, Hotel InterContinental's Portuguese guest chef Luis Miguel Marques Caseiro, Celeste's Ej Gondoy, InterCon's Cyrille Soenen and Club Punta Fuego's Tony Palermo

GRILLED Beef Medallion "Pinay Inasal-style" with Roasted Garlic Mash, Caramelized Shallots and Soy Calamansi Glaze

HOT Samoan (rice cake) on dark muscovado sugar and cocoanut latik with fresh sweet mango and spice candied ginger leaf ice cream

Expect to have an unforgettable meal when the best cooks in town party

Bicol's Creek Inn region Bikol 2005.

One of the big hits that evening was the grilled beef Medallion (Pinoy Inasal-style with roasted garlic mash, caramelized shallots and soy calamansi glaze. Tyrrell's Old Winery Shiraz 2002 went well with the beef.

Fund for aspiring chefs

To cap the wonderful meal, Amezaga dished out Una Banana de Oro, a banana sugar and latik with fresh sweet mango and spicy candied ice cream.

Amezaga was quite pleased. "It's not every day that you get to cook for your peers. In better use, the pleasure was all mine."

While the guests generously enjoyed the special meal, it was obvious they were just as happy to spend time with their colleagues talking shop.

The occasion was made more memorable and meaningful with the launch of a fundraising campaign for the chefs outreach program for the benefit of young, underprivileged Filipinos aspiring to be chefs.

LTB's outreach program has so far received over P150,000 in donations.

E-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

Feast on Vietnamese appetizers

DINING OUT

CAFE NGUYEN offers Pasta with Chicken and Pesto (Pesto Sauce), Tropical Prawn and Vegetables Salad, Pasta with Tuna and Tomato Sauce, Pasta al Arrabbiata with Parmesan Sauce, sandwiches, fish and chicken dishes with grilled vegetables and brown rice. Cafe Nguyen is located at the G/F of Tita Tony Gokongwei Condominium, Pio Del Pilar cor. P. Tuazon Boulevard, Cubao, QC.

Winners of Doreen Fernandez food writing tilt

OVERALL winner Jay Sabido (center) and runners-up Dexter Diarito, Marian Limuli, Christine Marag and Bobbi Tan Rodrigo hold up their trophies by Bobby Castillo of Seagull Gourmello.

THE DOREEN Fernandez Food Writing Award 2004 announced the winners of this year's Traditional Filipino Cooking essay competition.

Jay Sabido was named winner for "Remembering My Grandmother with Binolonan."

There were four runners-up this year. Those were Dexter Diarito for his "The Balingasag Gob: Hereality," Judith Tan Rodrigo for her "Courtship, Marriage and Boxing Talangka," Marian Mendoza Limuli for her "My Mom's Pinunjat" and Christine Marag for her "Labor of Love."

Other finalists included C. Dennise Mangaoang ("Witch Lola with Love"), Guillermo C. Tatoan Jr. ("Memory of Taste: The Chavacano Speaker"), Marjorie Marie Negus Sukardo ("The Origin and Inducion Fire Chocolate: Number 46 and 18"), Elizabeth Calvo ("Photo Missing Chocolate") and Gloria Yuan Andre-Q. Castandang ("Dark Enchilado or Bacalao").

Cash prizes were given to the top winners. Jay Sabido received P10,000 and the runners-up, P5,000 each.

All the finalists received a variety of books and magazines, subscriptions to culinary magazines and food products.

The two students who were given special citations for their pieces were Regina Isabelle Antonio Rumuds ("Discovering of the Plate") and Diana Arden ("Life in Sinigang"), both seventh grade students of Miriam College.

The awarding ceremonies took place at Chef Ed's Restaurant. All the finalists, sponsors and guests were treated to a family-style lunch by chef Ed Quimson.

Sponsors this year are The Asturias Foundation, Century Tuna Canning Corp., San Miguel Corp., Seagull Gloria Corp., Swiss Baked, 4809 (JBS Publishing, Avrel Publishing, Center for Culinary Arts, Fully Booked, National Book Store, Geek Culinary Lifestyle, F&B World, Flavors and Food magazines, Emerald Residence, Double Food Inc., Edna Mangal-La, Mabuti Shrimps, Mandarin Oriental, New World Restaurant, The Peninsula Manila and Worth Philippine Flora Society, Center for Asian Culinary Studies Cafe Trafalgar and Unique Baking Philippines, Le Gourmet and Chefs.

GRADE 7 students of Miriam College, Regina Rumuds and Diana Andres, received special citations.

LIFESTYLE

Curry- flavored face-off

WILSON Chu of Banana Leaf Curry House awards the golden wok to Chef Obi Bahadur Gurung.

Text by Ruth L. Navarro
Photos by Jon Cozac Perodan

IS it possible to concoct a culinary masterpiece in a minute?

Four chefs did not exactly do it in one minute during the cooking of Banana Leaf Curry House in Mohinig. It took more like half an hour but, with spectators hovering all over their pots and pans, the feat was still impressive.

Inspired by the popular cooking competition "Iron Chef," the culinary masters worked against the clock to whip up four dishes with a mystery ingredient.

Chefs Obi Bahadur Gurung of Nepal, Lobo Kok Ho of Malaysia, Cesar Mike Llorca of the Philippines and Ranganayaka Nanandakumar of India battled it out at the center of the kitchen-inspired restaurant. The coveted prize was a golden wok, symbol of culinary excellence.

After host Akiko Thompson revealed curry was the Iterian ingredient, the chefs hurriedly worked on their concoctions and the restaurant was filled with the sound of chopping knives and the hissing of boiling liquids.

A few minutes later, the distinctive scents of the popular spice wafted through the air.

Filipino chef Llorca said his Madras Lamb Curry Tenate would be a good alternative for the usual chicken and beef fare.

Crowd favorite

The chef might have had the homecourt advantage, but chef Nanandakumar easily took the spotlight and became the crowd fa-

CONTINUED ON C12

CAKE DECORATING; SAUSAGE MAKING; COOKING & BAKING LESSONS

Sylvia Reynoso-Gala

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WITH more than 20 years of experience behind him, Banana Leaf Curry House Hong Kong executive chef Lenny Yu is famous for his culinary skill in combining Western and Eastern flavors.

Banana Leaf Curry House lets four culinary masters come up with a new addition to its menu

Curry-flavored face off

From page C3

vorite. His playfulness endeared him to the spectators around his worktable. He said he named his recipe Thanushkodi Style Mutton after his son.

Chef Loke's Nyonya Style Assam Curry Fish Head drew the interest of the audience because of the sheer size of the fish. The chef remained serious-looking and focused despite having to answer several questions from the curious onlookers.

Chef Gurung said he adjusted his menu's recipe to appeal to the Filipino taste. Judge and chef Lenny Yu was quite impressed by Gurung's winning Chicken Makhani, which he said had the "perfect taste" for the Banana Leaf Curry House.

Wilson Chu of Banana Leaf Curry House said the winning dish would soon be included in the restaurant's menu. He added that if the others were good as well, "We just might include the other three in the menu."

Here's the winning recipe of Chef Dil Bahadur Gurung of Nepal:

Chicken Makhani

(One serving, good for two)
Makhani Paste:
200 g white onion
200 g tomato
15 g cashew nuts
3 g cinnamon stick
3 g star anise
2 g bay leaf
5 g cloves
5 g green cardamon
5 g coriander seed
5 g *masala*
5 g red chili powder
1 c water
1 c whipping cream

Boil all paste ingredients in water and whipping cream. When cooked, blend until it acquires a puree texture. Set aside.

Chicken Marinade:
½ k boneless chicken
5 g salt
5 g chili powder
5 g turmeric powder
5 g ginger garlic paste
½ cup lemon juice
½ cup yogurt
5 g MSG

Marinate a half kilo boneless cubed chicken with salt, MSG, chili powder, turmeric powder, ginger garlic paste, lemon juice and yogurt for three hours.

In a pan, sauté the marinated chicken in ghee oil, chopped onion and tomato for five minutes. Then put the *makhani* paste and let it cook for two minutes. Season with salt, sugar and fenugreek leaf.

Garnish chicken *makhani* with grated boiled egg and coriander with cream.

Banana Leaf Curry House has branches in Greenbelt (8128618), The Podium (6876808) and Alabang Town Center (772883).

AWARD-winning Chicken Makhani

CHEF Rangaswamy Vasandakumar regales Akiko Thompson with his Thanushkodi Style Mutton tale.

FILIPINO Chef Mike Literal

CHEF Loke Kok Fai of Malaysia